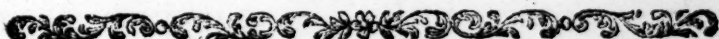


THE *PA 13*
HISTORY
OF

Joshua Trueman, Esq;

K
AND

Miss Peggy Williams.



D U B L I N :

Printed by A. REILLY, for the Booksellers.

MDCCLV.



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B O O K I.

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JOSHUA TRUEMAN.

IN one of the coldest, darkest nights of December, as Mr. Joshua Trueman, a young countryman, was returning to his inn from a relation's, whom he had been to visit, a violent shower of rain obliged him to take shelter in a kind of entry. There he stood musing on his wretched circumstances; for the poor youth, by the contrivance of one of his fellow-travellers, had been cheated out of all his cash. He had not been there many minutes, when two persons entered, which he could just distinguish by the lamp that glimmered over the door, were of different sexes. The woman seemed very earnest in discourse; but was interrupted by the man, who pronounced with great emphasis; 'Virtue! what the devil, have not I paid enough for her virtue? have not I kept her these two years from starving? look to it; for if she treats me to night as she did yesterday, to morrow I shall send her to live upon her virtue.' To this the woman replied, 'For God's sake, don't speak so loud; if you would have heard me, you would have known
B that

‘ that my zeal did not merit this passion. I own, that
 ‘ we owe all to your goodness, and I have done all in
 ‘ my power, to make the girl grateful to her benefac-
 ‘ tor ; but she is obstinately bent on ruin, and has vow-
 ‘ ed to leave the house, if I ever mention your name
 ‘ to her again. It was with much persuasion, that I
 ‘ prevailed on her to eat ; she has done nothing but
 ‘ sob and cry since yesterday, and has hardly spoke a
 ‘ word. She could not be worse, if what she dreads
 ‘ had actually happened. And I have such a confi-
 ‘ dence in your honour,’ added the woman, in an
 insinuating tone, ‘ that I wish you had taken by force,
 ‘ what you will never be able to obtain without it.
 ‘ I ran to your house to inform you, that I was to be
 ‘ out to morrow morning early, and shall not return
 ‘ till late in the evening. Now Peggy’s not being
 ‘ well, will be an excuse for me to take the key, that
 ‘ she may not fit up for me. This key I will give you.
 ‘ Get but the better of her romantic pride, and all will
 ‘ be over.’

Young Trueman could scarce suppress his detestation of the vile woman ; his agitation made him make some little noise, which alarmed the two wretches who gave him uneasiness, and both cried, hift ! and listened. But the man observing that all was silent, gave the woman some answer to her diabolical proposal ; but what it was, the young countryman could not hear, as it was spoke almost in a whisper. However as he heard money chink, he thought he had reason to believe, that the proposal was accepted. The woman, after having thanked the gentleman, bid him a good night ; on which they separated, the man going out of the entry, and the woman knocking at a door just opposite to the place where the young man stood. It was opened by a charming young creature ; who, though a languid dejection overspread her features, appeared to him the most lovely object he had ever beheld. She accosted the beldame whom he held in abhorrence, by the fond title of mother, and expressed her joy at her return. He heard no more, as the door was immediately shut.

The

The rain was over, but the strong idea he had conceived of this lovely girl, who notwithstanding all her virtue, was, he found, doomed to fall a sacrifice to the attempts of a brutal ravisher, kept him from observing that it was so, and he remained some minutes, revolving in his mind many expedients, for preserving the destined victim. At last he thought of returning to the house he came from, when chance brought him to the knowledge of the abominable contrivance, in order to wait on his cousin, who was esteemed a person of probity, and had, with the character of an honest man, amassed a fair fortune. This gentleman was out, when he first called at his house, and his servants, as they did not imagine a fellow in a coarse freeze-coot could be related to their master, had never asked him to come in; but gave him an answer at the door. This usage the young man had sense enough to dislike; but an empty pocket obliges us to gulp down many an indignity. He fancied, that as soon as he had informed his kinsman of what he had discovered, he would excuse his returning at an unseasonable hour; for the charity of this gentleman, I mean the report of it, had reached as far as Buckinghamshire, from whence Mr. Trueman was just arrived.

On the door's being opened by a servant, he told his name; and, as he had met with so cold a reception before, added, 'My father is your master's uncle.' This procured him an invitation into a parlour, where he stayed some time, before his cousin appeared. He was a grave man, turned of fifty, and at that time, as he approached with a frowning brow, seemed something older. His man had told him of his visitor calling him his kinsman; and the mean appearance of the youth, who was a good deal travel-soiled, gave umbrage to his pride. But though his look did not greatly prejudice young Trueman in his favour, he was infinitely more disgusted at the sound of his voice, which informed him, that he might as well plead with the kite to spare the harmless pigeon, when just darting on the unprotected innocent, as with his charitable cousin, in favour of the beautiful maid, whose distresses had made

him forget his own, since this grave man, this man of honesty and probity, was no other than the wretch whom he had heard calmly listen; and, as he believed, consent to, and reward the proposal of a mother, to betray her virtuous, unsuspecting, defenceless child, to infamy and ruin.

This discovery made the young man almost unable to answer the common questions, relating to the welfare of his family; but however, recollecting himself, he at once resolved to conceal the main design of his visit. His kinsman, on his giving him a letter from his father, enquired into his abilities; and, in short, after some airs of importance, consented to receive him into his family, in quality of a clerk; but told him, that for a day or two, he should be engaged in an affair of consequence, in the service of a friend, and would not insist on his attendance for that time; adding, that he might divert himself with seeing whatever he thought worth his notice, before he applied to business. The youth, who, as he had not a shilling in the world, would gladly have dispensed with this indulgence, replied, with a timid fearful accent, that he was not fond of fights; and would, if he pleased, serve him directly. The merchant, with a look that would have given him great pleasure if the horrid scheme had not run in his head, replied, that he supposed, that his father had been close fisted, and had not given him any great quantity of cash; 'however, said he, as you soon will be able to help yourself, you shall have of me what money you want;' and on his desiring him to lend him a guinea, actually advanced him two; but the gentleman, had in the course of his business, been so used to deal in paper, that though it is possible he designed to make his relation a present of this trifle, he no sooner laid the money on the table, than he drew out of his pocket-book a scrap of bank paper, and scrawled out a promissary note, payable in two months. To this note Mr. Trueman signed his name, and his worthy cousin consigned it to the place he had taken it from, saying, as he put it up, that he should not insist on the

the conditions till it suited him. He then, perhaps pleased, that he had made sure of his young kinsman, as he was a remarkable swift writer, and from his being unacquainted with the customs of the town, had agreed to serve him at an under price, condescended to talk to him pretty freely, and even invited him to stay supper; but to this the situation of his mind would not suffer him to consent.

On his leaving his cousin's house, he could not pass through the street, where he had seen the amiable girl, without wishing to be near her, and this wish naturally led him towards the place, where he had taken shelter from the rain: but, alas! with all his diligence, he could not find the least sign of the friendly entry; on which, fancying he had mistaken the street, he patrolled all the adjacent turnings; but in vain. In short, after a fruitless search, he returned to his inn, quite spent with fatigue and vexation. He was, 'tis true, a little relieved, with respect to his own necessities; but by whom was he relieved? by a wretch whom he detested as a monster, and for whom he could feel none of the pleasing sensations of gratitude. The situation of the innocent virgin, raised in his benevolent heart, the strongest images of horror. He would, if he had never seen her, have saved her from the rage of brutality and lust, from a sense of humanity; but he would probably not have traversed so many streets, nor remained the whole night entirely without sleep, in the most torturing anxiety, had not his compassion been stimulated by love: But this was a secret even from himself; he believed, that all the tender pity he felt, was only excited by the peculiar misery of her circumstances; and imagined, that if he could be so happy as to deliver her from impending ruin, his mind would experience the same tranquil ease he before enjoyed.

The restless agitation of his thoughts, roused him from his bed before the sun, who at that season of the year, does not shew his face above three or four hours before the fine lady. He again sought for the place that had afforded him shelter the preceding night;

but was as much at a loss as ever. At length he observed a large house which had two doors, and as he was persuaded that this was the place, he resolved to wait some time, but was quickly confirmed that he was right; for, an elderly woman opening a door, not only gave him a sight of the corner in which he was concealed, while he heard the villianous contrivance; but of the charming girl, whose impending fate, had so greatly affected him. She was in a neat but plain dishabille, and was standing at the window of a small parlour that faced the street. This object convinced the artless young man, that he was actuated by a stronger impulse than meer compassion, since his heart beat an unequal measure, and his whole frame was in an unusual tremor. The woman who opened the door, seemed to eye him attentively, which on his observing, he walked further off; but soon returning, had the pleasure of seeing her go out. The young woman, on her mother's going away, left the window; and though Mr. Trueman waited several hours in sight of the house, she did not give him the satisfaction of making her appearance. The necessity there was of his informing her of the fatal secret, at last got the better of his bashfulness, which had all this time kept him in a painful suspense, and he ventured to knock gently at the inner door, when a voice from within asked who he wanted? This question a good deal embarrassed him; but at length recollecting, that he had heard, the woman call her daughter Peggy, he replied, 'Miss Peggy, I have business of the utmost importance with you, and beg you will open the door.' This request was complied with, after the fearful maid had eyed her unknown guest from the window, and on his entering the house, civilly inviting him to sit down, she asked him, if he brought her news of her father? adding, with tears, 'Nothing else is of Importance to me now, doomed as I am to wretchedness.' He, unable to begin the detested subject, answered that he could not inform her of any thing relating to her father, as he had not the happiness of knowing him: 'But, I hope, he continued, my business will plead my
pardon

‘pardon with his lovely daughter, for this intrusion, since it is to save her from almost immediate destruction. It is this, that has brought me hither. I last night heard by accident, that your innocence and beauty were to-night to be made the prey of cruelty and lust : and if my life alone could prevent the horrid design from taking effect, believe me, dear maid, I would freely give it, to preserve you.’

The young lady seemed filled with horror and amazement at this declaration, and answered hastily ‘For heaven’s sake, what do you mean ? This night ! what can be done this night, that can so much affect my peace ? My choice has been long made to prefer virtuous poverty to the detestable slavery of vice ; and I think that is all I have to dread.’ Trueman then, after having prepared her by slow degrees for the horrid tale, gave her an account of all he had heard ; and as there were some circumstances in the detail, which it was impossible he could learn from any but her mother, he easily gained credit for the rest. The shame and indignation she justly felt for a parent who had bargained for, and set to sale her innocence, her virtue and honour, together with the terror she felt on her own account, raised such a tumult in the breast of this defenceless young creature, that when he had finished his narration, sobs and groans were the only language she was able to utter. The poor youth said all in his power to comfort her, and even advised her to fly from that dangerous, that dreadful house ; but, as soon as her tears would give her leave to speak, she told him, that she knew not to whom she could fly for succour ; for the bad man had, for a long time, with the appearance of the most perfect and disinterested benevolence been her support : though her father, on account of a large sum he owed this very person, had been obliged to leave his family. And that however base his designs were now upon her, he had had the art to establish so fair a character in the world, that she should be treated as an impostor, if she gave the true reason of her flight. ‘ Besides,’ added

she, bursting afresh into tears, 'whom can I accuse, but her whom I am bound to reverence, who is still my mother, notwithstanding her cruelty in having taken part with my enemy, to accomplish my ruin?'

While she was speaking, they were alarmed by a loud knocking at the door: the young woman was extremely terrified at seeing three men, who were perfect strangers to her, in a rough manner demand entrance. Trueman, with more resolution than his appearance promised, gave her the strongest assurances, that he would defend her at the expence of his life. The door was opened, and on one of the men's shewing the almost fainting girl a piece of paper, and demanding her keys, he dealt him a blow that laid him senseless at her feet; on which his companions, by no means pleased at meeting so warm a reception, where they expected no other opposition than that of female tears, which had long ceased to make any impression on their callous hearts, immediately rushed out of the house; but took care to lock the outer-gate. This precaution passed unobserved by Trueman, who was in too much fear for the life of the fellow who lay motionless on the floor, to attend to any thing else, and it was not till the return of the two men, that he even knew that they had been absent: but these brought with them a person who roused his sensibility on his own account, by rudely seizing him by the collar, and demanding by what authority he struck his majesty's officer, in the execution of his office? To this he boldly answered, that as he, in an insolent manner, demanded the young lady's keys, he took them all for a gang of robbers.

As the man on the ground had kept his station, from the fear of a more powerful arm than his own, for on his coming to himself he found none but his antagonist and the lady in the field of battle! he had thought it most prudent to wait their return; and therefore, he no sooner saw Trueman secured, and heard his defence, than finding it no longer necessary, on account of his own safety, to preserve the appearance of death, he started

started up, and bellowed out in vindication of his honesty, loudly threatening the young man with the effects of his vengeance. On this Trueman, who had no notion of the law being a proper plaister for a broken head, replied with some disdain, that he would give him his belly-full of vengeance, if he who held him, would let him go. This was immediately construed into threatening the officer's life, and the poor youth was dragged before a neighbouring justice, and was after a few insignificant questions, ordered to be committed to the Round-house, for further examination, on a servant whispering to his worship, that a young woman, who had been with him in the morning, waited according to order to speak with him.

It was now near dark, and the terrible situation in which he had left Miss Peggy, added to the thoughts of his own inability, while shut up in a prison, to assist or defend her, gave him inconceivable torture. He here remained for some hours alone; for the master of this place not imagining that he could make any advantage of a tenant of so unpromising an appearance, gave himself no concern about him; but as the evening advanced, he was in no want of company; for three women of the town and a couple of pick-pockets, were introduced into the same apartment.

Every one in this company, except Trueman, were of very communicative dispositions, and presently entered into a free conversation with each other, while the melancholy youth sat brooding over his misfortunes, unmindful of all that pass'd, till the horrid execrations, he heard in a voice which he fancied not quite unknown to him, roused him from his rêvery, and made him look up. He now beheld the fellows who had cheated him on the road, one of whom, casting his eyes at the same time upon him, without the least appearance of shame, said to his companion, 'Damme, Jack, the very putt we stripped at Whetstone. What the devil is he in for? His money came very seasonably. I'll help him out of the scrape, if I can. I don't think he will be ungrateful.' 'That will be past your skill, I believe,' replied one of the women,

‘ for he was committed for striking Mr. Touch, when
 ‘ he was serving an execution, and won’t easily come
 ‘ off, except he has money to bribe the jailor, or the
 ‘ justice’s clerk, who, as his master does not under-
 ‘ stand the law, makes a pretty penny of his place.’
 T en directing her discourse to Trueman himself,
 ‘ Chear up, young man, said she, while the women
 ‘ have eyes, such a pretty young fellow can have no
 ‘ cause for despair. I could venture to promise you
 ‘ your enlargement, and a maintenance to boot, for
 ‘ the trifling service of defending me, and two more
 ‘ pretty girls, from insult, while we follow our calling.’
 To this proposal Mr. Trueman replied, by asking, what
 was their profession? At this question, a horse-laugh
 ran thro’ the place, and the woman rejoined with an
 impudent giggle: ‘ Why, I’ll tell you my dear, we call
 ‘ ourselves ladies of pleasure; but the ill-natured
 ‘ town bestows on us the coarse title of whores; while
 ‘ they that abuse us, are often the first cause of our be-
 ‘ ing so. I my self was once committed to Bridewell
 ‘ by the very justice that got me with child, when I
 ‘ first came out of the country. But damme I was e-
 ‘ ven with his worship yesterday; for I persuaded Jen-
 ‘ ny Gosling, to swear a child to his footman; and
 ‘ the old goat, having a mind to a tit-bit himself, order-
 ‘ ed her to come to him to-day; now, for all her great
 ‘ belly, she’ll give his worship a warm reception, or
 ‘ I’m mistaken. For she lived a month this winter
 ‘ with Squire Gull, whose footman died last week in
 ‘ the Lock.’

The astonished countryman heaved a heavy sigh at
 this fine harangue; and, without returning any answer
 to the woman, begged the keeper to let him have some
 other apartment, for he was extremely ill. The man
 churlishly answered, that he used his prisoners all a-
 like, and did not know any pre-eminence he deserved
 above the rest. ‘ Why,’ returned Trueman, ‘ I am
 ‘ neither a thief nor a murderer,’ ‘ That may be,’
 replied the keeper; ‘ I wish you were, for then I might
 ‘ hope to get something by you. The greatest rogues
 ‘ are my best friends. I live by them, master. I have
 ‘ had

‘ had but two men in my possession, since I have enjoyed my post, that were sent here for nothing, and they had not a cross to bless themselves with. So deliver me from honest men, I say.’ A noise without put an end to this speech, and he ran to usher in more company ; on which the room, which was none of the most spacious, was soon filled with an odd medley. Here were women of the town, that fluttered in ragged silks ; and beaux, that glimmered in tarnished embroidery. The poor countryman had now his ears every moment offended with horrid oaths from the men, and his sense of smelling made a plague to him, by the vehement sighs of some of the ladies. But his thoughts were at this time too much engaged for him to pay any great attention to what was conveyed by either of these senses : his lovely Peggy was left to the mercy of villains, or if saved by his friendly caution, was lost to him, since it was not probable that he should ever see her again.

He was ruminating on this tormenting circumstance, when the man he had struck came up to him, and giving him a slap on the shoulder, cried, ‘ Well, my friend, who looks most like a thief, you or I? Now my passion is over, methinks I am sorry for your sake, at what has happened ; but you was devilish free of your fingers. However, you need not be frightened ; the young woman has prevailed with me to get your discharge, and you are now free to go where you please.’

The sound of liberty was not half so grateful to his ears, as the sweet hope of his hearing news of his charming Peggy was to his imagination. He eagerly asked, where he might find her ? when to his great disappointment, the officer told him, he had promised to keep that a secret, and would be as good as his word ; and then added, ‘ I was obliged to do my duty, though the tears of the poor girl made me pity her. I offered her to leave my men in the house till to-morrow ; but she refused me with such signs of afflict, that I should have believed her out of her senses, if I had not seen her behave with the utmost calmness

‘ calmness afterwards : she packed up the few necessities she had left, which were few indeed ; for my employer had ordered us to strip her to the utmost extent of the law, and was going out of the house, when the gentlemen who sent us thither came in, and insisted on knowing what fellow she had with her, meaning you. She replied, “ You have now no right to examine me, since you yourself have paid my debt of gratitude ; but I owe it to myself to protest, that I never saw the young man till a few minutes before the execution came into the house ; but I have obligations to him that nothing can enable me to repay ; and destitute as I am, I would strip myself of the little I have left, to purchase his enlargement.” ‘ She seemed going to say something else, but could not for crying ; so, faith, I took pity on her, and have released you in consideration of a mere trifle ; for all she could get for her cloaths did not amount to a guinea. I cannot think how Mr. Symonds could be so hard-hearted to so pretty a creature,’

As this was the name of Trueman’s charitable Kinsman, he repeated it with some sign of consternation, and again intreated the man to let him know, where he might find the young woman, that he might return her the money, she had parted with her cloaths for. ‘ I fancy this is a bite,’ answered the man ; ‘ for, if you had money, why did not you say so before you came here ? A little half guinea now and then, for smart money, is a perquisite belonging to our function ; but as you are a raw ignorant lad, and have been pent up here for some hours, I’ll accept of a crown, and refer you to my wife for news of your mistress, who has made no promise to keep where she is, a secret, tho’ I have.’ Mr. Trueman had not changed either of the guineas he had received from Mr. Symonds ; but the hope of being introduced to Peggy, soon brought out one of them, which he gave the officer to change, who returned half a guinea, and then left him, under the pretence of getting silver : In short, he waited a considerable time before he came back :

back: but at length he entered along with the jailor, who demanded fees, to the amount of the remainder of his change. This he paid, and was permitted to leave the place, receiving, at his departure, several hearty curses from his fellow-prisoners; because he would not treat them out of the remaining half-guinea.

C H A P. II.

He lies a night in a spunging-house, meets there an unfortunate gentleman, who describes, in the most lively colours, the distresses to which he is reduced by an obdurate creditor.

ON Mr. Trueman's release from the prison, the bailiff gave him an invitation to his house, which, as it was near three in the morning, Mr. Trueman thought proper to accept, and on consideration of his paying two shillings, he was furnished with part of a bed in a sorry garret. The countryman, as he had not the least notion of his being still in a prison; wondered that the master of the house should lock the outside of his lodgers chambers; but he had scarce lain down, when his bed-fellow asked him, in a doleful accent, if he had any hopes of being soon out of that cursed house; and what sum he was in for? Trueman, a little startled, though he did not understand what he meant, replied, 'Two shillings, and think that is more than I shall ever be in for again, unless they keep softer beds.' The stranger believing the young man bantered him, asked pardon for his impertinence, and said, his own distresses made him feel for those of others, and as he had observed, when he came into the room, that he was a very young man, pity had made him interest himself in his affairs; but he would not trouble him, since his curiosity gave him offence.

They now both remained silent for some time; but Mr. Trueman revolving in his mind what his new companion had said, and hearing him frequently sigh, began to have some suspicion of the truth, and as he found the stranger was not asleep, in order to begin a conver-

conversation, he asked him how long he had been Mr. Touch's lodger? To which he replied, that he had been his prisoner ten weeks; but was to remove that day to Newgate. The countryman started at the word, Newgate, and imagined that he had got some dreadful criminal for his companion: for as he had been told, when he came thro' the gate of that prison, that it was the place where the condemned malefactors were confined, it never entered into his thoughts, that the unfortunate tradesman and guilty felon, were shut up in one house of common wretchedness; he therefore repeated abruptly 'Newgate! God bless me! what company!'—The poor man who heard his exclamation, replied, 'Don't be frightened, young man, I have been more weak than wicked; I have been guilty of no intentional robbery, tho' my cruel creditors consign me to a greater punishment than that inflicted on the highway-man or house-breaker, who are delivered from the miseries of a prison, by death or banishment; either of which I should look on as a mercy.' He then informed him, that as he had not the happiness of being free of the city, he was obliged to go to the county-jail for a large sum, that repeated misfortunes had rendered him unable to pay. The unhappy debtor gave the melancholy history of his affairs with some degree of firmness, till Mr. Trueman asked, if he had any family? then bursting into tears, he replied, 'Ah there lies all the bitterness of grief; the dear, the tender names of wife and child, tear my very heart-strings: believe me, young man, I dread nothing for myself, but when I think of these dear objects of my care, every tender idea rushes into my thoughts, and melts me down to more infant softness; but I beg your pardon, tho' I am a husband and a father, you who, I suppose, have not experienced those endearing ties, will have but a mean opinion of me for this weakness.'

Mr. Trueman answered, that the man who had not a tear to bestow, when such dear relations were in the prospect of misery, could not boast of a manly, but of a savage heart; but perhaps, Sir,' he added, 'all your
anxiety

'anxiety may be removed; some fortunate event, some
 'unlooked-for incident may relieve you.' 'Yes,' re-
 plied the stranger: 'I know I shall be relieved; but
 'not on this side the grave. I have been long enured
 'to misfortunes, but the consolation of one of the best
 'of wives has hitherto enabled me to bear up with
 'some degree of fortitude: but in a jail, I shall be de-
 'prived of this relief, since I am, by the villainy of
 'a pretended friend, reduced to the extreme of want.
 'My poor wife, who, when she married me, disobliged
 'all her relations, is this morning to come to take
 'her melancholy leave; for on no other terms will
 'her hard-hearted father be prevailed on to provide for
 'her and her child. It is for the sake of this child, that
 'I have by much entreaty forced her to seem to aban-
 'don me. I know her heart too well to fear she will
 'really do so; for the sake of this dear woman's peace
 'of mind, I have prevailed on Touch, the master of
 'this house, to let me continue here till she is gone to
 'her father, who lives in the country, as I know, it
 'would shock her tender heart to see me shut up with
 'the vilest miscreants; and I design, if possible, to
 'keep the place of my confinement from her know-
 'ledge. This is my present situation; but, young
 'man, I hope yours is far from being so deplorable.'

Trueman replied, that his heart was far from being
 at ease, tho' he was no prisoner. 'No,' returned his
 companion, 'then I suppose you are an acquaintance
 'of Mr. Touch's. To this he replied, 'I did not
 'know any thing of him, or any one else in London,
 'till the day before yesterday. I came to town by the
 'invitation of a relation, who promised to take me into
 'his service; but chance has, in the short time I have
 'been here, discovered him to me in such black co-
 'lours of villainy, that I detest him as a monster, and
 'would gladly escape from the obligation I am under
 'to serve him.'

'If the person you are to serve,' replied the Debtor,
 'is a vicious man, you are right to detest his vices;
 'but a man may make a good master, and yet be a
 'bad husband or father. I was so struck with the
 'modesty

‘ modesty of your look when I saw you come into the room; that I then resolved, if you would permit me, to give you the best advice in my power, relating to the means of extricating yourself from the trouble in which I believed you involved; and if you think me worthy of being trusted with the knowledge of your affairs, my advice is still at your service.’

Mr. Trueman replied, that he had very few secrets, and had, in the short time he had lived, met with nothing extraordinary; but if the most explicit account of himself could entitle him to his friendship, he would with pleasure tell him the minutest circumstance of his life.

The stranger returned, ‘ I confess the gentleness of your behaviour, and your manner of expressing yourself, so very different from what we generally met with from a country rustic, have raised my curiosity; and as there are still several hours to day-light. I should be glad to beguile the tedious minutes. If I have it not in my power to do you any service, I honestly promise that you will receive no hurt by your confidence.’ Thus intreated, the youth began a short history of his life, which will be found in the next chapter.

C H A P. III.

Trueman gives his own history, from his earliest childhood, to his new companion, who falls asleep in the midst of the relation.

‘ I With, sir,’ said the young countryman, whom I left in the last chapter, just going to give an account of himself to his inquisitive companion, ‘ you do not repent your attention to so trifling a history as mine, since I have passed seventeen years of the twenty I have lived, almost entirely secluded from the world, and out of the reach of all that could be called adventure.’

‘ My father is at present a farmer, near Buckingham, and is in tolerable good circumstances; but I
‘ am

' am unhappily the object of his aversion, though I am
 ' not conscious that I deserve his hatred. A strong
 ' propensity to learning, when I was very young, so
 ' endeared me to a brother of my mother's, who was
 ' curate to a neighbouring parish, that he begged my
 ' father to allow him what he thought my board would
 ' stand him in at home, that he might himself become
 ' my tutor. This request was complied with, and my
 ' worthy uncle behaved to me with the extremest ten-
 ' derness and affection; but before I had been with
 ' him three years, or had reached the age of seven, I
 ' lost my mother. I soon found the effects of this loss;
 ' for my father marrying a widow who had a son by
 ' her first husband, he transferred all the complacency
 ' of a father to this child; nay, to such a height did
 ' he carry his partiality, that many did not scruple to
 ' say, that this boy was really his own son, though his
 ' present wife bore him in the life-time of her former
 ' husband: but this I believe, to be a mere malicious
 ' surmise. My Mother-in-law offended that I should
 ' outstrip her son in learning, though he was two years
 ' my elder, insisted on my father's taking me home,
 ' alledging, that as my uncle could not afford to keep
 ' me, she did not see any reason I should be brought
 ' up in idleness, or what was as bad, poring over
 ' books, while her child earned half his living, by fol-
 ' lowing the plough. My poor uncle therefore receiv-
 ' ed a summons to send me home; but tho' he had but
 ' twenty-five pounds a year to live on, and had two
 ' children of his own, he chose rather than part with
 ' me, to let me continue at his own expence.

' This having for some time silenced the murmurs
 ' of my mother-in-law, at my living what she called,
 ' an idle life, I enjoyed, under my dear uncle's care,
 ' the pleasure of indulging my natural thirst for
 ' knowledge: this worthy man well supplying the
 ' wants of my father's affection, by every good office
 ' in his power. 'Till I was about thirteen years old,
 ' I had received from home every year a trifle that
 ' served me for apparel and pocket money; but on my
 ' applying to my father for my usual allowance, he

told

‘ told me, he thought I was now able to provide for
 ‘ myself as well as Bob, meaning my mother’s son,
 ‘ who he said, saved him the charge of a servant. On
 ‘ my complaining that I thought this usage hard, I was
 ‘ answered by my mother, that she wondered I should
 ‘ think so, for if I would come and live at home, she
 ‘ should for her part make no difference between me
 ‘ and her own child. I answered her, I confess a little
 ‘ bitterly, and in a manner that did not at all become
 ‘ me, that it was possible her son might esteem that
 ‘ good usage that I might think but indifferent, since
 ‘ we did not stand in the same relation to my father. I
 ‘ can’t forget, I added, that Bob was once the son of
 ‘ Goodman Robbins my father’s thresher, though now
 ‘ he has elbowed me out of his favour.”

‘ I think I do not go beyond the truth, if I say fire
 ‘ flashed from her eyes, at this pert reply. As soon as
 ‘ rage would let her words get vent, she poured forth
 ‘ a torrent of abuse, not only on me but on my dead
 ‘ mother, and worthy uncle, who she said, had better
 ‘ been a thresher too, than a beggarly scoundrel par-
 ‘ son; and then said, she had told my old fool of a fa-
 ‘ ther, what it would come to, if he let me stay there.
 ‘ “ I knew your wise uncle,” added she, “ who, with all
 ‘ his learning, can hardly keep the wolf from the
 ‘ door, would teach you to despise your father; be-
 ‘ cause forsooth, your grand-father, was just such ano-
 ‘ ther ragged parson as himself. Let him keep a good
 ‘ gown to his back, before he pretends to keep other
 ‘ folks children in laziness. I’m sure my boy works
 ‘ hard enough, not to be twitted in the teeth with it,
 ‘ and so shall you too, before you get any thing here,
 ‘ by my consent. You may try if your books will
 ‘ keep you, since you are so fond of them. May be,
 ‘ in time, you may be such another fine gentleman as
 ‘ your uncle, and be bowed to by all the children in
 ‘ the parish; an honour, that I suppose, makes up for
 ‘ the want of many a good meal.”

‘ This biting jest on my dear uncle’s poverty, stung
 ‘ me to the quick, and I replied with more anger than
 ‘ prudence. I had much rather live on one meal a-day,
 ‘ and

‘ and know something, than share in Bob’s ignorance
 ‘ with his plenty, I shall never envy him your love, I’m
 ‘ sure, though I think it cruel in my father to let me
 ‘ feel the effects of your hatred, and to suffer you to
 ‘ abuse my dead mother, or her relations, who are
 ‘ every way your betters, and to whom you owe what-
 ‘ ever makes you fancy yourself above them; and
 ‘ added with a childish spite, you ought not to upbraid
 ‘ me with my uncle’s ragged gown before you pull my
 ‘ mother’s off your own back.’

‘ A violent blow put a stop to my prating, and as
 ‘ it fell on my nose, almost covered me with blood.
 ‘ At this instant my father entered, for my good
 ‘ brother had been to inform him, that I was quar-
 ‘relling with his mother. The condition I was in,
 ‘ crying, and wiping the blood from my face, told him
 ‘ pretty plainly that she did not need a second; yet, on
 ‘ her telling him, that the little urchin had had the
 ‘ impudence to tell her of her wearing his mother’s
 ‘ cloaths, he flew at me, and beat me violently with
 ‘ his fist. The shame of such correction was worse
 ‘ to me than the pain; for my dear tutor used no such
 ‘ boisterous methods of chastisement; but what made
 ‘ my young heart boil with rage, more than my mo-
 ‘ ther’s words or father’s blows, was the impudent
 ‘ taunts I received from my booby brother; who,
 ‘ when I was going out, asked me to stay dinner, and
 ‘ said, with a sneer, “ Though mother had scolded
 ‘ you, and father beat you, I would not have you angry
 ‘ with the beef and pudding; for I don’t suppose it
 ‘ comes every day at uncle’s.”

‘ As this was spoke before the servants, who grinned
 ‘ in approbation of their young master’s wit, I was
 ‘ extremely vexed, and answered sharply, ‘ Though I
 ‘ could not cope with the old one, the cub should find
 ‘ the punishment due to his impudence the first time I
 ‘ caught him; and then rushed hastily out of the gate.
 ‘ I was afterwards informed that my brother Bob was
 ‘ sent to call me back; but he, either afraid of my
 ‘ threats, or to make me appear to my father in the
 ‘ worst light, never came near me, tho’ I loitered a-
 ‘ bout

'bout the fields some time ; yet he had the ill-nature
 ' to tell my father, I had refused to return, when I
 ' really knew nothing of the message. On my arrival
 ' at my uncle's, I found the news of my quarrel with
 ' my mother had got thither before me, with many ag-
 ' gravations, and was much surpris'd to see him ex-
 ' tremely uneasy. On my enquiries what I had done
 ' to offend him, he told me, he was not angry with
 ' me ; but had received a message from my father, who
 ' threatened him with ruin, if he encouraged or enter-
 ' tained me.' " I love you, my dear child, said the
 " good man, too well not to be sensible of your suf-
 " ferings ; but indeed I must blame you for behaving
 " disrespectfully to your mother-in-law. You ought
 " out of duty to your father, at least to treat her with
 " decency. It is with extreme regret that I find I must
 " part with you ; but my sister, when she married,
 " should have received forty pounds from me, which
 " she lent me when I went into orders, and which I
 " have not since been able to repay. I gave your fa-
 " ther a bond for this money, and he has, I suppose ;
 " by the instigation of his wife, threatened to sue me
 " for it, if I harbour you one night in my house. You
 " know my inability to pay a quarter of the sum ; yet,
 " my dear boy, I will run the hazard of his anger,
 " and strive to reconcile you ; but if I can't, I will, if
 " possible, prevail on your uncle Thomas, who, you
 " know, has no children of his own, to provide for
 " you till you are able to help your self." ' I returned
 ' him thanks for his care ; but said, that I believed all
 ' application to my father would be in vain ; for I
 ' would suffer any hardship rather than endure Bob's
 ' insolence, and hear him or my mother spoke ill of by
 ' my father's wife.

' The good man did all in his power to bring me in-
 ' to a more forgiving disposition, though young as I
 ' was, I could not help observing his own face glowed
 ' with resentment while he was exhorting me to forget
 ' injuries ; for I had as an excuse for my own heat,
 ' mentioned the provocations I had met with on his ac-
 ' count. However, his affection to me got the better
 ' of

' of his anger, and he went that very night to my fa-
 ' ther's, and with much entreaty, prevailed with him to
 ' forgive me, and to allow me something a year or two
 ' longer. During this time, I applied myself close to
 ' study, and my dear uncle was, by the favour of the
 ' lord of our manor, enabled to pay his debt, and to
 ' live comfortably; for the 'squire allowed him thirty
 ' pounds a year out of his own pocket, and took on
 ' himself the charge of maintaining his eldest daughter,
 ' who was a pretty girl near thirteen. Thus we went
 ' smoothly on for almost two years, after my cousin
 ' Nancy was taken care of by the 'squire, when my
 ' uncle received a letter from his Patron that imbittered
 ' all his enjoyment.

' This letter, after enumerating the many obli-
 ' gations the writer had conferred on my uncle, contain-
 ' ed a proposal to provide for me, if I could be pre-
 ' vailed on to marry my cousin, who was big with
 ' child. This first news of his daughter's disgrace,
 ' threw her fond father into an agony that made him
 ' incapable of concealing the contents of his epistle
 ' from me. He flung himself into a chair, crying,
 ' "Barbarous bounty! unhappy girl!" These words a-
 ' waked my attention, and I hastily snatched up the
 ' paper that had dropped from his trembling hand. The
 ' contents both surprised and afflicted me. I loved my
 ' cousin with the same affection, I believed I should have
 ' felt for a sister; but I blushed with indignation at the
 ' proposal. My uncle, with the tears running down
 ' his face, cried, "Dear Jos. what answer shall I send
 ' this wicked man? he treats me as if he thought I
 ' knowingly gave up the honour of my child, as the
 ' price of his favour, when heaven is my witness, I
 ' looked on him rather as the protector of her inno-
 ' cence, than the betrayer of her youth. Some un-
 ' common arts have been used: I'm sure there must;
 ' to make her forfeit her virtue. Poor dear girl, what
 ' will become of her, while thus exposed to misery
 ' and shame, and perhaps fond of her betrayer?"
 Then stamping with passion he cried; "but what arts
 ' more proper to serve his base designs, than his seem-
 ' ing

“ing kindness to me? Horrid Kindnesses! that were
 “to be purchased by the prostitution of my child! but
 “it is not his wealth, nor my poverty shall hinder my
 “letting him know, that I scorn to be his pander.”

‘In this temper, he would have gone to the squire’s
 ‘house, had not I by main force prevented him. My
 ‘uncle was very much beloved by his parishioners, a-
 ‘mong whom was an old woman that had been god-
 ‘mother to my cousin Nancy. I advised him to make
 ‘her the confident of his daughter’s misfortune, and as
 ‘much as possible to conceal it from the rest of the vil-
 ‘lage. It was some time before I could bring him
 ‘to reason; however, at last he complied with this
 ‘advice.

‘The good dame no sooner heard the unhappy affair,
 ‘than bursting into a flood of tears, she cried, “Ah,
 “poor child, I was always afraid what his kindness
 “would come to.” ‘My uncle asked her, if she had
 ‘such fears, why she did not inform him of them be-
 ‘fore? She told him, that as she could not let him
 ‘know the reason of her suspicion, without divulging
 ‘a secret that she had solemnly promised never to dis-
 ‘close; she did not expect to be able to make him
 ‘mind her: however, she offered him all the con-
 ‘solation in her power, and very frankly proposed
 ‘my cousin’s coming to lie-in at her house, saying,
 ‘as she had a kinswoman with her, they should be
 ‘able to keep the whole affair secret. This was
 ‘gladly accepted. Our next care was to answer the
 ‘squire’s epistle, and this my uncle did in the follow-
 ‘ing manner.

“Sir,

“**I**T is with extreme regret I write to a man, that
 “I can suppose me base enough to wink at the dis-
 “honour of my child. You know but little of my
 “heart, if you imagine I thought my daughter’s vir-
 “tue was to be the price of my comfort. No, sir,
 “the horrors of a jail is to me far less terrible than in-
 “famy or vice. Heaven forbid that I should, to
 “escape shame, draw a virtuous young man into dis-
 “honour.

" honour. I have taken the utmost care of my ne-
 " phew's education, and can I advise him to marry a-
 " nother's——? but I forget it is my own child, to
 " whom I am giving this horrid name : A name which
 " perhaps, she does not deserve ; but if this is the case,
 " what epithet is bad enough for her betrayer. It
 " would, in the opinion of the world, if you had made
 " her your wife ; have disgraced you as a gentleman ;
 " but to ruin her whom you promised to protect, de-
 " grade you, as a man. Oh, sir, it is in the bitterness
 " of grief I tell you, that the misery you have brought
 " on me, and my child, will be doubly repaid to your
 " own bosom, in this world or the next. The last
 " request I shall ever make you is, that you will send
 " my poor ruined Nancy to her afflicted father ; who
 " will, in the best manner he is able, smother her dis-
 " grace. This vile abuse has cancelled all my obliga-
 " tions, and I desire no further favours from a man
 " who has so cruelly robbed me of my peace. Your
 " withdrawing your bounty may make me poor ; but
 " I am sure, my now accepting it, would render
 " me guilty. I trust in providence for support, and
 " desire not to partake of the affluence of villains, if I
 " must also partake of their crimes."

' This letter produced an answer full of contume-
 ' lies, upbraidings and threatnings, not only of with-
 ' holding the thirty pounds a year which my uncle had
 ' received from the 'squire for some time, but of get-
 ' ting him removed from his curacy, if he let his
 ' tongue run to the prejudice of his benefactor's repu-
 ' tation ; but concluded with promising great things,
 ' if the whole transaction was kept an inviolable se-
 ' cret. This my poor uncle was as much inclined to,
 ' as the wicked man himself, from a regard to his
 ' daughter's character.

' My cousin came in a few days, to her father's,
 ' where she stayed some time, as she was not yet big
 ' enough to discover her condition. She seemed at
 ' her first coming home very melancholy ; but in spite
 ' of

of all her father could say, was far from shewing any resentment to the man who had seduced her. My uncle, who was more angry at her taking his part, when he loaded him with reproaches that his villainy deserved, than at her former weakness, began to treat her a little roughly, when she, unused to her father's frowns, grew more and more dejected. But this continued not long; she soon appeared chearful and easy: and this alteration in her behaviour, both astonished and afflicted my uncle. I had a suspicion that she held a correspondence with the 'squire; but as I knew my uncle, in the first transports of his rage, was incapable of moderation, I kept this suspicion to myself; and advised him to send my cousin Nancy to the good old woman's, where she was to lie-in. I have since been sincerely sorry for this advice: since it was productive of the most fatal consequence to my dear uncle.

He ordered his daughter to prepare for her removal; but she made many excuses to prolong the time. This, as her shape would no longer conceal her circumstances, gave her father some surmize of the truth: his fears made him peremptorily insist on her going the next day. The same night he was called up, to pray with a poor labouring-man, who had been some time ill of a fever and light-headed, and to whose wife he had given orders to let him know when her husband returned to his senses, though it should be midnight. He went out of bed from me, telling me, he must go into my cousin Nancy's chamber for something he wanted for the relief of the sick; for he was the physician of the poor, as well as their pastor; but he had not left me a minute before I heard a little bustle, which was quickly followed by a deep groan. I ran, I flew to my cousin's room, where I found my uncle stretched at his length on the floor without any sign of life; but neither my cousin nor any one else in the chamber. I took him up in my arms, and with much ado laid him on the bed, and applying a bottle to his nose, which I found on the table, by the light of a
dark

‘ dark lanthorn that stood near it, I presently brought
 ‘ him to his senses. The first words he spoke were,
 ‘ “ Oh my dear boy! my ungrateful daughter
 ‘ has killed me !” ‘ The groan I had heard,
 ‘ made me imagine she had indeed, made some at-
 ‘ tempt on her father’s life; but he undeceived me,
 ‘ by saying, “ I cannot bear it, she is sold to shame, to
 ‘ prostitution and ruin :” He then seemed almost
 ‘ choaked, and a torrent of blood gushed from his nose
 ‘ and mouth. Terrified to death at his condition, I
 ‘ called in the next door neighbour, who pouring some
 ‘ vinegar down his throat, a little stopped the suffusi-
 ‘ on of blood; but he remained so extremely weak
 ‘ and low, that he could not speak so as to be heard at
 ‘ any distance.

‘ Unmindful of every thing but my uncle, I had let
 ‘ the dark lanthorn stand on the table, when I called
 ‘ in this man, and near it lay a letter-case, that had the
 ‘ name of the ‘squire on the outside stampd on the lea-
 ‘ ther, which had in the confusion escaped my notice.
 ‘ This I took up, as soon as I saw it, and put in my
 ‘ pocket. When I was able to leave my uncle, I o-
 ‘ pened it, and found a letter directed to the ‘squire
 ‘ from my cousin, wherein she begged him to come
 ‘ and save her from going to the house of goody Hof-
 ‘ kins, where she should be guarded closer than in a
 ‘ prison, by the jealousy of Miss Jenny. This unhap-
 ‘ py girl expressed an unreserved affection, in the ten-
 ‘ derest terms, and seemed to have the highest confi-
 ‘ dence in his love to her. There was likewise a rough
 ‘ draught of a settlement, in which there were blanks
 ‘ left for the name of the parties concerned. This I
 ‘ thought was designed for my ruined cousin, till look-
 ‘ ing on the date, I found it had been wrote several
 ‘ years before. As there were no papers of value, I
 ‘ did not think I was obliged to return the letter case,
 ‘ and took no notice to my uncle, that I had found it.
 ‘ A day or two after, when he seemed a little better,
 ‘ he ordered me to sit on his bed side, and then gave
 ‘ me the following account. “ When I came into
 ‘ this room, says he, I found my daughter up and dres-
 ‘ sed, and a man muffled up in a great coat talking
 C “ with

“ with her, and holding a pocket-book in his hand ;
“ which he hurried into his pocket on sight of me,
“ and snatching a pistol which lay on the table, he
“ ran out of the room, followed by Nancy. I was
“ quick enough to seize her by the arm, just at the
“ door ; but the man returned, and presenting the
“ pistol to my breast, swore in a whisper, that I was a
“ dead man, if I did not let her go, or made the least
“ noise. All I remember after this, is, that your cou-
“ sin with struggling got loose, and ran, or rather flew
“ from me, while I was held fast in a chair by the
“ fellow, who immediately left me, pulling the door
“ to with all his force. At the same instant, I got my
“ hand on the lock, when the person without letting
“ it suddenly go, I fell backwards on the floor, and
“ in my fall struck my head against a chest : but I
“ believe I hurt myself before I fell ; for I felt an in-
“ tense pain in my side, on my giving a spring forward,
“ in order to reach the door.”

‘ He had scarce given me this detail, before he was
‘ again seized with a vomiting of blood in great quan-
‘ tities : we got all the help possible, but in vain ; for
‘ he died in less than a week.

‘ Thus bereft of my support, I had no choice to
‘ make ; but was obliged to submit to the grating
‘ hardship imposed on me by my mother-in-law, who
‘ insisted, that I should share with her son in all the
‘ labour of the barn, or the field. This fatigue of bo-
‘ dy did me no manner of harm ; but as it deprived
‘ me of my favourite employment, reading, I bore it
‘ with some impatience. However, going one mar-
‘ ket day, to sell some corn for my father, I wrote a
‘ receipt for a lad that was incapable of doing it him-
‘ self, when the gentleman to whom it was given,
‘ pleased with my writing, asked me many questions,
‘ and among the rest, whether I would be willing to
‘ serve him as a clerk, telling me he was an attorney at
‘ a market-town, about seven miles from my father’s.
‘ Glad at any rate to be from home, I hesitated not a
‘ moment to accept of this offer ; but promised to
‘ serve

‘ serve him, if he could obtain my father’s appro-
 ‘ bation.

‘ He came the next day to our house, and in three
 ‘ or four days more, I entered on my new employ-
 ‘ ment. My master was an honest good-natured man,
 ‘ and used me very kindly ; I continued with him al-
 ‘ most two years, in perfect tranquillity, except some
 ‘ uneasy reflections on my father’s unkindness, who
 ‘ treated me with great coldness when I went to see
 ‘ him, and frequently came to the town where I lived,
 ‘ without calling on me. At the end of this time, my
 ‘ master told me he was going to be married to a young
 ‘ woman in London, with whom he was to have five
 ‘ hundred pounds, adding, that she was the sister of
 ‘ Squire Saunders’s gentleman, naming the villain,
 ‘ who had debauched my cousin, and been the cause of
 ‘ my dear uncle’s death : I could not hear him menti-
 ‘ oned without horror ; but my master did not observe
 ‘ any change in my countenance ; he had given me
 ‘ this information in the evening, and took horse for
 ‘ London the next morning ; but my astonishment is
 ‘ not to be described ; when at the end of three days,
 ‘ I beheld that unhappy young creature, my uncle’s
 ‘ daughter, come home with my master as his wife.
 ‘ I had a full view of her as she was walking in the
 ‘ garden with her husband, soon after her arrival, and
 ‘ could not help taking notice, that with her inno-
 ‘ cence, she had lost the look of it. I kept out of her
 ‘ sight that night, in order to revolve in my mind,
 ‘ what step I ought to take ; and for fear her surprize
 ‘ at seeing me, might give my master some suspicion.
 ‘ But next morning, while her husband was out on
 ‘ business, she came into the office where I was writing,
 ‘ and accosted me with very little emotion, saying,
 ‘ she was very much obliged to me, for my not
 ‘ taking notice of her the preceding night, and promi-
 ‘ sed to use all her influence that my prudence might
 ‘ not go unrewarded. The air of importance with
 ‘ which this was delivered, piqued my pride, and I re-
 ‘ plied tartly, that I desired no reward, since what I
 ‘ did was out of regard to the memory of her dead fa-
 ‘ ther, and the peace of my master : “ And why not

“ out of friendship to me ? she answered, smiling, I
“ can assure you, if we are no longer cousins, I have
“ it in my power to do you a very considerable piece
“ of service.” Her disclaiming me for a relation,
“ though she had no superiority over me, except what
“ she had gained by infamy, made me feel some indig-
“ nation: but my master’s return put an end to our con-
“ ference. From the time of his marriage he began to
“ treat me with less kindness, and my kinswoman
“ grew by degrees, a perfect shrew to us both. At the
“ end of seven months she lay in, and the ’squire him-
“ self stood god-father to the infant. This condescen-
“ tion to a relation of his servant, was much applauded
“ by all our visitors, and my poor deceived master, to
“ shew his gratitude for the obligation, suffered himself
“ to be made quite drunk by pledging the toasts of
“ his guest. My cousin had been at church the same
“ day, was dressed, and really looked very handsome,
“ at least I thought so, and I believe our condescend-
“ ing god-father was of my mind, since he stayed sever-
“ al hours after the rest of the company went away,
“ and my master had been carried motionless to bed.
“ I dissembled my suspicions; but really felt sincere
“ compassion for the deluded husband, and the ut-
“ most detestation for my perfidious cousin, whom I
“ now gave over, as lost to all sense of shame.

“ I wanted advice; but had no body in whom I
“ could confide; my father, I durst not trust, lest he
“ should tell his wife, who would improve the accusa-
“ tion to my ruin; therefore, as I could not bear to be
“ a witness to the injuries done my master, though he
“ now began to treat me in a rigorous and churlish
“ manner, I determined to leave my place; but before
“ I could put my design in practice, my vile cousin took
“ care to lessen my credit with her husband, and actual-
“ ly accused me of taking a ring, which she said she had
“ lost. Conscious of my innocence, I boldly braved
“ the search, when, to my infinite surprize, it was found
“ in a small box belonging to me, that had been once
“ my uncle’s.

‘ Struck

‘ Struck stupid at this sight, I for some moments was incapable of recollection. I could indeed hear my inveterate kinswoman say “ search farther,” and to her eternal shame, my master did so ; for the next thing he took up was the letter-case that was dropped in her chamber the night she ran away from her father’s. This he opened, and as she had made no concealment of her maiden name, discovered by her letter the true motive of all the squire’s generosity.

‘ The moment I saw what was in his hand, I would have snatched it from him ; but in vain did I attempt it, he had already seen too much for his peace ; he stamped, he raved, and, I believe would that instant have sacrificed his wife to his vengeance, if I had not prevented him. But though I did what I could to save her life, and to pacify the violent rage of her husband, I had felt too much by her accusations, not to insist on her clearing me about the ring. This my master had probably forgot ; but my cousin with more presence of mind than one would think a person so lost to vice could be capable of, told him with many tears, that it was a contrivance of her own to get me out of the house, lest I should one time or other disclose the secret. Protesting, in the solemnest manner, that she had never been false to his bed, since she had been his wife. My master was the dupe of this hypocrisy, and for my part, as she had cleared me, I took no care to undeceive him ; but that very day left his house, believing my self not safe within the reach of her artifice.

‘ I met with a very cold reception at my father’s, my mother and brother-in-law trying all in their power to make home uncomfortable to me, though I had told them, that I purposed to stay no longer than I could suit myself with a place. The master I had served gave me but small wages, and I had been silly enough to lend a young fellow with whom I was acquainted, two guineas, as part of a sum he was obliged to pay for the maintenance of a bastard-child. This kindness to one who was guilty

‘ of a fault, gave offence to the pure and immaculate
 ‘ virtue of my mother-in-law, who insisted on my su-
 ‘ ing my friend, and on my refusal, protested I should
 ‘ have no assistance from my father or her, while rakes
 ‘ and whoremongers were so much in my favour. In
 ‘ short, I soon grew weary of their ill treatment, and
 ‘ having prevailed on my father to give me a letter of
 ‘ recommendation to a relation, who had sent me an
 ‘ invitation to come to London the summer before, I
 ‘ came to town.’ At this part of the relation, True-
 man found he had tired the attention of the poor gen-
 tleman he talked to, who had dropped into a slum-
 ber, and as it is impossible my reader may be nearly in
 the same condition, I shall here put an end to this
 chapter.

C H A P. IV.

The prisoner is waked by tidings that make him en-
 tirely forget our young countryman, and which will
 very probably, for a time, have the same effect on
 our readers.

IT was scarcely light when the poor unfortunate man
 was waked by the gaoler, who gave him a letter,
 which, after he had looked on the superscription, he
 opened with trembling haste : when he had cast his eyes
 over the contents, he desired the officer to leave him a
 moment while he recovered from his surprize. He was
 no sooner gone, than falling on his knees, he uttered
 the warmest expressions of gratitude to heaven for some
 signal relief, then recollecting himself, he rose hastily,
 and with a good deal of confusion in his look, asked
 the young countryman pardon, for the oddity of his
 behaviour; saying, an unexpected turn of providence
 in his favour, had made him entirely forget that he
 was not alone. ‘ I believe,’ he continued, ‘ I need not
 ‘ a better apology than this letter will make for me,
 ‘ after what I have told you of my circumstances.’
 Mr. Trueman took the letter, which he held towards
 him, and found the contents as follows.

“ Dear

“ Dear Brother,

“ **I** Make no doubt but you have many years believed me dead, and to the world I have long been so, since I have been eighteen years buried in a convent. I sent you an account of the flight of my husband, and in the same letter, told you my resolution of hiding myself for ever; but some glimmerings of hope, that I might again recover my fugitive, kept me from taking the veil, though I lived as retired as the professed recluse, my aunt paying a small stipend for my board. About seven weeks since, I was sent for to attend the sick bed of this relation, who was given over by her physicians. I have in my former letters told you, how penuriously she lived: judge then my astonishment, when I found myself, at her death, possessed of upwards of forty thousand pounds, in money and jewels. ~~It is taken for granted that I am her only heir; but I~~
 “ should ill deserve this unexpected bounty of providence, if I wronged my dearest brother of his undoubted right to half this wealth; for my aunt died without a will. The greatest part of the effects are in jewels. I purpose to keep them till I come to England, which will be as soon as I can settle my affairs. Yours, I hear by an English merchant, are in no happy situation. I have therefore sent over bills for your present relief, to Mr. Wilkins the banker, and have sent him orders, to give you an unlimited credit for what you have a present occasion for. I have one circumstance to add to this good news, that I believe, will be almost equally acceptable, and that is, that my chief reason for wanting to be in England, is my beginning to doubt the truth of that religion for which I have been such a bigot, I had almost said a martyr, since I lost all I held dear, by my steady attachment to it; but what I would say, cannot be confined within the narrow limits of a letter, and as I soon hope to converse with you

“ with the utmost freedom, I will omit particulars till
 “ that happy time, and subscribe myself

“ Your affectionate sister,

“ MARGARET GOODWIN.’

While the youth was reading this letter, the good man to whom it was sent, received a second visit from Mr. Touch, who informed him that his wife was below. ‘ Send the dear woman up,’ was replied with vivacity ; ‘ for I can now suffer her to see my wretched accommodations, since it is in my power to dry up her tears with the hopes of better fortune.’

The young man was still in bed ; but on hearing this, he begged leave to dress before the lady entered, and immediately hurried out of bed. The gentleman had forgot that he himself was half naked ; but it was not to be wondered at, that he did not remember this piece of decorum. The bailiff, who now scented gain, in the altered looks of his prisoner, told him with great animosity, ~~that he was with~~ his wife in the parlour, and he would send her up by the time they were dressed. At last a little girl about nine years old came into the room, running with eagerness to the gentleman, cry’d, ‘ My dear papa, I could hardly make Mamma let me come to see you before we go into the country. I wonder what I have done to make you angry with me. My mamma said it would break your heart to see me.’ The child was immediately followed by his wife, a lady that seemed once to have been a fine woman ; she approached her husband with a dejected air, when he running to her in a transport of joy, clasped her in his arms ; crying, ‘ O my dear, we are happy ! providence has blessed us, and we shall still be happy ! I shall not leave thee ! I shall not leave thee !’ Good manners, here obliged the young countryman to retire ; he therefore left them, that they might the more freely indulge their raptures.

C H A P V.

Trueman takes possession of his place, hears news of his mistress, comes a few minutes too late, to meet with her, while the poor girl, struggling with new persecutions, flies from place to place.

TRUEMAN's first question, on his coming down stairs, was addressed to the mistress of the house, for news of his Peggy, whose innocence and sweetness had been brought more fresh to his mind, by the little girl above stairs, whom he fancied she greatly resembled. The woman told him, that she had recommended her to wait on a child to a lady in the Strand; but on his desiring to be directed to the place, she answered, that she had given her word to tell no one where she was, adding, that his knowing it would do him no good; for men were not suffered to visit the servants in that family; 'besides,' said she, 'I don't suppose she'll stay long there; for her mistress is too fine a lady, to keep a girl that has no more gowns than backs;' she then turned from him, leaving him just as wise as before. He again applied to the husband for intelligence, who would fain have persuaded his wife to tell the young man where to find her; but this request made her quite angry, and she grumbled out, 'what, and have you a *cattling* after her too?' 'Not I, I'll assure you I have something else to do, than bring wenches and fellows together. I want no more nurses to pay.' The meekness with which this was taken, assured Mr. Trueman, that the behaviour of his host was full as gentle to the women as the men, and that he did not imitate those husbands, who, tho' the veriest cowards alive to all the world besides, make themselves some amends by tyrannizing over a wife or a servant.

Unable to learn what he wanted to know; he was leaving the house when the gentleman who had been his bed-fellow, came down stairs, and insisted on his giving him his company to breakfast. The young

countryman had, in recounting the transactions of his early life, given this worthy man an artless picture of a good heart. There needed no more to influence him in his favour, and he sincerely resolved to do him service; but his own affairs now demanded all his attention, he therefore offered him no present assistance: indeed he had not yet heard enough of his story to know that he stood in need of any.

While they were at the tea-table a messenger was sent to the banker, who on sight of Mrs. Goodwin's letter, came himself, with a sum sufficient to deliver her brother from his uneasy restraint. When the debt was discharged, the gentleman took leave of his gaoler, who, notwithstanding he had, till this fortunate morning, treated him with the utmost neglect, if not cruelty, and had been with difficulty persuaded to let him stay in his house five days longer than his cash held out, demanded civility-money; saying, that if he had not let him stay there, it would have cost him a considerable sum for fees, at his entrance into Newgate. The prisoner, as he saw the bare mention of that dreadful place discomposed his wife, stopped his proceeding with a piece of gold, when the woman of the house being paid an exorbitant bill, and the servants rewarded for their attendance, the poor man again breathed the fresh air, after having been confined ten weeks for a sum that his creditor would have felt no real inconvenience from the want of; but he was a very honest man himself, and had thrived, from whence he thought that success always attended right principles, and from the moment Mr. le Brun was unable to pay his bills, judged him unfit for society, and therefore did what he could to keep him out of it.

As the coach was full with himself, wife, daughter, and his friend the banker, Mr. Trueman took his leave, after having, at Mr. le Brun's request, given him a direction to his inn, where he promised to call on him as soon as his affairs would permit.

Mr. Trueman, as he had left a small debt undischarged, went thither directly, and found a letter had been left for him the preceding night, from his worthy

thy cousin Symonds, which required his attendance the next day. As he held the man who was to be his master in the utmost abhorrence, he had some debate with himself, whether he should comply with this order; but his own indigent circumstances at length determined him, to fulfil the engagement he had laid himself under. Mr. Symonds, as he had not the least notion that he had been the bar to his base designs, talked before him very freely of an execution that had been served on the goods of one who had absconded; as this was spoke while his daughter, an amiable young woman about seventeen, was in the room, she with much compassion in her look, asked what was become of poor Miss Peggy, the unhappy debtor's daughter, adding, that when she was her school-fellow, they had done twenty good natured things for one another. The father replied, he supposed the fellow who had been found in the house would take care of her. 'What fellow papa?' was returned with much eagerness. 'I dare say, she would encourage none that deserved that title.' 'You dare say,' was replied with a frown, 'but I tell you, I should not have seized the goods if I had not been told there was a man loitering about the door till her mother went out, and as soon as she was gone was let in.' 'Well, papa,' answered the young lady, 'I wish you would give me leave to find out this poor girl. Jenny has to-day given me warning; perhaps in her present distress, she will be glad to supply her place.' After a moment's pause, Mr. Symonds gave consent to this proposal: possibly he thought the very offer might stop the mouth of scandal, at the cruelty of his late proceeding, or more probably he imagined his attempts might be successful, when he had a master's authority to back his solicitations; but be that as it will, Trueman felt an honest joy at the hopes of living under the same roof with the agreeable Peggy, resolving, if Mr. Symonds still persisted in his villainous designs, to risk his life in her defence.

The young lady found the officer's wife more tractable than Mr. Trueman had done; she not only told her
where

where she might find her, but described the wretched distresses she must labour under for want of cloaths, in such colours, that this tender-hearted girl came home full of tears, and intreated her father to restore her little necessaries. Mr. Symonds protested that he knew nothing of her apparel being taken from her; saying, if it was, Touch went beyond his orders, and pulling an inventory out of his pocket, gave it to his daughter; telling her, she might reserve what she thought proper for her new chamber-maid. Mr. Trueman was desired to read the catalogue aloud, and Miss let him go on without interruption, till he came to two pictures in miniature. 'Whose are they?' she asked. 'her papa, 'her own and her father's,' was answered, 'Oh save them by all means, at least the gentleman's,' replied Miss Symonds, 'for I am sure, papa, it would grieve my heart, if I wanted bread, to part with your picture, especially if you were in the condition of this poor man, whom she will probably never see again.' Mr. Trueman hardly let the young lady stop, before he artfully enough added, 'I fancy, madam, you had better save them both, for the young woman may one time or other be able to purchase them back again, and family-pictures, I believe are esteemed but of little value, except by those they were drawn for, or their relations.' He was ordered to mark them, and then went on without stopping till he had finished the whole; for there was nothing else that this benevolent girl thought would be extraordinary useful or pleasing to the forlorn Peggy. The next day she went, according to the direction she had received from Mrs. Touch, and found her busied in attending a little boy. The appearance of Miss Symonds had gained her admission into the nursery; but poor Peggy joining in her idea the daughter of the man she detested, to her old companion, felt such an odd mixture of joy and terror, that she hardly knew how to receive this unexpected visit with decency. Miss Symonds was much more surprized at her refusing her offer, than at her embarrassed behaviour. 'Live with
' you,

‘you, madam!’ was repeated, ‘did not I know the wicked motive, how blessed would be my situation!’ Then a little recovering herself, she added, ‘dear Miss, I beg your pardon. I forgot him I must accuse is entitled to your affection.’ Miss Symonds colouring with dutiful resentment, as she thought the character of her father struck at, replied, that she forgot too, that her papa had only done himself justice, and seemed cruel now, because he had been more than commonly kind; ‘but dear Peggy,’ she continued softening her voice, ‘I will allow, this mortifying reverse of fortune, may make you see things in the worst light. My father had been told, that you encouraged a man to visit you in the absence of your mother, and I believe, suspected that with his assistance, you designed to convey away the goods, since by papa’s way of speaking of him, I find he was too shabby a fellow to be the lover of Peggy Williams, who, I dare say, has too much sense to think meanly of herself, because her father has been unfortunate.’ She was interrupted by Peggy, who all in tears cried out: Yet shabby as he was, I owe to him that I am not now below an honest dust-man. You wrong me, madam, if you think I accuse your father of injustice, in taking away what I owed the use of to his bounty. No, had I nothing to lay to his charge, but the stripping me to these despicable rags, I would gladly accept your offer; for my mistress to-day told me, if I had no better cloaths, she could not keep me; but, dear madam, I beg you would believe, that it is not my pride or resentment, at being reduced to such miserable circumstances, that forces me to refuse you.’ The many tears she shed while she was speaking, strongly moved the young lady to pity her; but as she seemed inflexible, she ceased to press her, and after having given her a trifle to purchase a few necessaries, left her, and returned home.

Trueman had been pleasing himself with the hopes of soon seeing his dear girl; but found all these hopes disappointed by the account he heard Miss Symonds give her father of her refusal; he narrowly watched his
master’s

master's looks during this recital, and as he seemed affected, began to conceive hopes, that he repented of his brutality ; but time convinced him, that pity was only a temporary passion in the breast of this gentleman, while lust and cruelty held a continual and tyrannic sway.

Unhappily for Peggy Williams, her emotion when she was talking with Miss Symonds, had made her speak loud enough to be over-heard by her mistress, who with a meanness below a gentlewoman, had lent her attention to what passed between her servant and her acquaintance ; and Peggy's attributing her being desired to live with the young lady to wicked motives, made her sagacious mistress see in the look and air of the innocent Miss Symonds, the prostitute, and nothing could have induced her to believe the contrary. She was as firmly persuaded that the place to which Peggy was invited, was no other than a brothel. Full of resentment at her room's being defiled by the breath of such creatures, she bounced from her dressing room the moment the young lady went away, and with a torrent of virtuous fury, assailed the ears of the astonished Peggy, who in vain defended the character of her guest. In short, she was bid to bundle up her rags, and leave the house immediately. This injunction the poor girl with a heavy heart obeyed, to the no small joy of her lady, who had never suffered her to have entered into her family, had not the shocking griefs she had endured for some time before she became a servant, a good deal sullied her natural bloom ; her assurance that her virtue and peace were now in no danger, had made that bloom revive, which rendered her disagreeable to her lady, who had made it a rule in the oeconomy of her household, never to hire a handsome servant. She had joined in her pure ideas, beauty and lewdness as inseparable companions, whenever the first was in the possession of people of mean fortune ; and probably the great difficulty she had experienced to keep herself chaste in younger life, though she was more indebted to fortune than nature, might be the inspirer of this censoriousness ; or she might think the fair complexion

complexion of poor Peggy, made her brunett appear less agreeable to her husband, who never reproached her with the sharpness of her tongue ; but it raised a suspicion in her bosom, that she owed the severity of the reproof to the baleful influence of some other female eyes. In reality, she was naturally jealous, and her yoke-fellow, though he owed the figure he made in life to her wealth, took very little care to remove her suspicions. He had, indeed, been undesignedly the cause of this wrath ; for as he himself conducted Miss Symonds to the nursery door, the lady his wife observed his assiduity, and instantly resolved to discharge her maid ; very likely it was this resolution that made her listen, in hopes of finding something to excuse her conduct. The gentleman, as he observed the glowing of anger on his wife's cheek, very prudently retired from the impending storm, or it is more than probable, he might have shared in the abuse suffered by the unfortunate Peggy ; for as he happened to know Miss Symonds, he would doubtless have confirmed what was said in relation to her birth and family.

The present that young lady had made this poor creature, was now her only resource, as her being discharged with so much hurry and fury, deprived her of all hopes of a recommendation. But we must leave her to find out a mean lodging suitable to the weight of her purse, which only contained a guinea, and a small picture of a lady, which her father had given her on his going abroad ; while we return to Miss Symonds who was exulting with filial tenderness and pleasure in the seeming compassion of her father ; who, as her first offers had been refused, gave her leave to make others, that ignorant as she was of the true motive of her being denied, she imagined would be received with gratitude and joy. As she had made some appointment, that hindered her going out that day, and was loth to defer letting the distressed girl know what she thought such good news till the next, she commissioned her father's new clerk to deliver the following letter into Peggy's own hands,

“ Dear

“ Dear Miss Williams,

“ **M**Y papa was so affected by my relation of your
 “ present distress, that he has given me leave
 “ to invite you to our house, not in quality of a
 “ servant, but as an acquaintance and friend, whom
 “ misfortunes, not faults, have rendered unhappy.
 “ You know, dear Peggy, my temper too well, not
 “ to believe me, when I tell you, how agreeable this
 “ commission was to my own wishes : you shall be to
 “ me on the same equality, as when our innocence
 “ and child-hood kept us from considering superiority
 “ of fortune in the false light in which mankind have
 “ thought proper to place it. I will take a pleasure in
 “ alleviating and sharing your sorrows : I am not with-
 “ out griefs of my own, which pain my bosom, by
 “ being kept secret. I hope from your consolation
 “ and advice the relief that my own reflections cannot
 “ afford me : Come then for the happiness of us both,
 “ and let us, by dividing our uneasinesses, lessen them.

“ I am, dear Miss Peggy,

“ sincerely yours,

“ CHARLOTTE SYMONDS.”

This letter did not reach the hand for which it was designed till some time after, and consequently remained unsealed, and its contents unknown to the bearer ; but the hope, the extatic hope, of seeing his dear Peggy, inspired the messenger with speed equal to that he would have had, had he known what he carried ; yet all his haste was not sufficient to answer his desires ; for the unfortunate girl had been forced from her place a few minutes before he reached the house. Miss Symonds had directed her letter to Miss Williams, and had forgot to bid the young man use, in his enquiry for her friend, an appellation more suitable than Miss, to her present situation ; so that it was some time before he could gain intelligence of her he wanted. The servant told him, that their lady had no company : on insisting that the person he meant, was there that morning, ‘ I’ll be hanged,’ replied a sneering

ing footman, 'if the man does not want the young woman that came to see poor Marget: But I suppose she is meat for his master: for it is a dainty bit of temptation, that's true: we know nothing of her, friend; but if you'll take a walk in Fleet-street an hour or two hence, you may possibly find her; for my mistress told my master just now, for all her modest looks, she was sure she had seen her there in an evening.' Poor Trueman stood for a moment at a loss what answer to make, till he recollected, the man had mentioned the name of Marget: he then asked if he could not speak with the maid that was called so. To this he was answered, 'Aye, friend, if you know where to find her; but she was turned out of doors just now, about the other young woman that you asked for first.'

Bewildered in perplexity, he knew not what to make of any thing that was said to him; he therefore returned to Miss Symonds, who was very little satisfied with the odd account he brought her of the ill success of his commission. On his telling her that he enquired for Miss Williams, according to the direction of her letter, she saw the oversight she had been guilty of, in not giving him orders to ask for her by the name of Marget, and immediately dispatched a maid-servant with her letter, and another direction. This girl soon gained far better intelligence than the former messenger, and brought her lady an account of the rough treatment that had been given to poor Peggy, and of her leaving the house, full of tears, without letting any one in it know to what place she intended to go.

As this young lady gathered from some circumstances in the maid's detail, that she herself was unhappily the cause of this fresh affliction to the distressed Miss Williams, she felt the tenderest pity, and would gladly have sacrificed almost any gratification to the greater pleasure of giving her succour. She ran to her father, who was then in his counting-house, and weeping told him what had befallen her friend, adding, 'O, Sir, what will become of her? I don't believe she has a friend in the World. I can have no peace till
' I

‘ I find her.’ The old gentleman seemed almost as much affected with her loss as his daughter ; but poor Trueman felt more than them both. It was in vain, that pity made Miss Symonds endeavour to find her out ; it was in vain that the old wretch her father, for the basest purposes, animated his daughter’s search ; it was in vain, that love, pity, and the warmest wishes inspired young Trueman with the most lively assiduity to discover her, the poor unfortunate Peggy remained a long time concealed.

C H A P. VI.

Trueman meets with no very agreeable usage from his master, who discovers that he owes to him his disappointment in the pursuit of his wicked amours ; and is, without design, the cause of strange commotions in the breast of a fair lady.

MR. Symonds, who perceived the assiduity with ~~which~~ Trueman endeavoured to discover the unhappy Peggy Williams, whom he supposed he had never seen, could not forbear conceiving some very favourable sentiments of a person, who, as he thought, took every opportunity to oblige him ; and indeed, had he been entirely disinterested, he could not have taken a more effectual method than this, to ingratiate himself into his master’s favour : it is not therefore to be wondered at, that he was treated with uncommon marks of respect by Mr. Symonds, till unhappily Touch the officer coming about some business to his house, accosted young Trueman with great familiarity, and asked him if he had found out the young woman ? Mr. Symonds, who happened to be present, eagerly enquired what young woman he meant, and on his being informed that it was Peggy Williams, he answered, ‘ Why, how came you to think of enquiring for her ‘ at Mr. Touch’s ?’ and immediately changed the subject, with an air of constraint and uneasiness. After a long conference with the officer, at which Mr. Trueman was not suffered to be present ; he appeared no more.

more the affable and friendly master ; but seemed to take a pleasure in giving him every mortification, and in employing him in offices that became a footman rather than a clerk. These indignities inclined the young man to leave him ; but alas ! he was more in his debt than he knew how to discharge : he had received at several times to the amount of eight pounds more than was due to him for wages : and as this was an insuperable bar to his seeking better usage in another place ; he took the wisest way of overlooking injuries which he had it not in his power to resent.

Miss Symonds saw with pain her father's altered behaviour, and endeavoured to find out the cause, by asking him what young Trueman had done to offend him ? But he waved the question, and on her repeating the enquiry, only told her, that he was a meddling blockhead, and advised her to keep herself at a greater distance. This injunction brought the colour into the young lady's face, and she replied, ' Why, papa, ' I never spoke to him in my life, but at table, and about Peggy Williams.' ' Why, there now,' her father answered, ' I warrant, you this same artless coun-tryman went on your errand out of respect to you ; ' why, child, you sent him to see his mistress. Touch, ' the serjeant, tells me, that he was the person he ' found in the house, when he seized the goods.'

As Mr. Symonds was here interrupted by being called down to a gentleman, who desired to speak with him, he did not observe the alteration his intelligence had made in his daughter's countenance, which had almost instantaneously changed from red to pale : in short, the poor girl felt for the first time, the torturing pangs of jealousy, almost before she knew she loved. Peggy Williams no more appeared to her as an object of pity ; she imagined she could gladly have changed circumstances with her, notwithstanding her own expectations, and the distresses of this poor girl, if by that means she could have been sure of Mr. Trueman's heart ; but though she felt the tenderest affection for the young man, she had too strong a sense of justice
and

and honour, to try to supplant her absent friend, by the mean arts of calumny and defamation, and too delicate notions of propriety, to let the least word escape her, that might discover the secret of her heart. Several months past on without hearing any thing of Peggy, during which time the painful restraint Miss Symonds had laid on herself greatly impaired her health. She was judged to be in a decline, and according to custom advised to the air.

While this young lady was in the country, her father took into his family an elderly woman in quality of house-keeper. Of this woman Trueman fancied he had some knowledge; but could not recollect her till he heard her called by the name of Williams; he then remembered the vile wretch he had heard bartering for her daughter's chastity. This woman frequently received letters which Trueman saw were communicated to her master, and she appeared a great favourite. Since Miss Symonds went into the country, there had not been a word spoke about Peggy Williams in the hearing of young Trueman: but this did not make him forget that amiable girl; he even fancied that she was often the subject of conversation between their house-keeper and his master, and that some of the letters just mentioned, came from her; but as he believed the present coldness with which he was treated, proceeded from his master's knowledge of his having saved her from his brutality, he did not wonder that every thing relating to her was concealed from him with the utmost care. He had many anxious moments; but as he had no one in whom he could confide, he kept all his suspicions to himself. While his mind was in this situation, Miss Symonds's distemper grew worse and worse; and there remained very small hopes of her recovery. Wicked as her father was, he loved his child with the utmost tenderness, and while she remained in this dangerous state, very probably thought of no criminal indulgence. As the air had done her no good, she came again to town; but she no sooner beheld Mrs. Williams than she insisted on her father's turning her out of the house, saying, she was a woman
of

of an infamous character, and had endeavoured to betray her daughter to infamy. Mr. Trueman observed his master's face glow with shame at this reproach ; but as he was at a loss to know how much of the story had reached his daughter's knowledge, he only replied, that if the woman was displeasing to her, she should be removed, and left her to give orders accordingly.

He was no sooner out of the room than Miss Symonds addressing herself to Trueman, asked him how long he had known Miss Williams ? He blushed, and answered, he had never seen her but twice. She replied, ' Then I suppose it was meer accident that brought you to the knowledge of her affairs. I wish I could prevail with you, to keep all you know a secret, for my papa's sake.' Mr. Trueman told her very politely, that he never had mentioned it, nor designed it, and was very sure he should always have too much regard for her commands to do it now on any consideration. Her eyes glistened her thanks for this compliment, and they entered into a kind of conversation for the first time. Mr. Symonds returned with an embarrassed air to the parlour, where he found Miss still talking with his clerk. The guilty always fancy that in their absence their crimes are the subject of conversation to those that know them. This fear made Mr. Symonds stop a moment at the door before he entered ; but on hearing no mention of himself, he went in. He found his daughter visibly altered for the better ; he congratulated her on this change, and even behaved to Trueman with condescension and affability. Miss Symonds daily recovered strength, and her father began now to see the cause of his daughter's illness ; he saw the modest joy that sparkled in her looks, when he deigned to talk with freedom to Trueman ; he saw her cheeks covered with blushes, if the young man addressed himself to her, though on the most trifling occasion. His hopes of her making a figure in future life, were by this discovery baffled ; but his child would be made happy, his own reputation would be secured,
and

and he should have no more a rival, if he condescended to take him for his son-in-law.

These considerations made him often favour his daughter's wishes, and contrive opportunities for [their being left alone together ; nay, he sometimes laid it as a sort of command on Trueman, to keep Miss company till his return. It is highly probable, had the youth never seen the distressed Peggy, the charms of Miss Symonds had found a ready way to his heart, and he had returned her affection with equal purity and ardour ; but as it was, he only felt for this agreeable young lady, a refined and tender friendship ; he rejoiced in the recovery of her health, without having the least notion of his having any share in that happy event. As they grew now pretty intimate, he took courage one day, in the absence of his master, to ask her, how she became informed of what was designed against Miss Williams ? She answered with some emotion, from Peggy herself ; but I should take it kind if you would never mention any thing about her ; for when I think of the share my papa had in that black affair, it gives me inexpressible uneasiness. This was imposing silence on him, from such motives as he could not but approve. I am far from believing but that the interest of her own heart had at least an equal share in this prohibition with her filial respect for her father ; but the artless young man saw no farther than she wished he should ; and, though he longed impatiently to learn news of his mistress, he implicitly obeyed her injunctions.

Time passed on without producing any declaration of love on the side of Mr. Trueman ; but as, by his silence, Miss Symonds imagined him equally indifferent with regard to Peggy, she hoped her condescending and respectful behaviour, joined to the certain advantages that must accrue to him from a union with one so much his superior in point of fortune, would not fail to make him open his eyes to her attractions. This hope, together with a delicacy of sentiment that would not suffer her to make actual advances herself, or permit others to do it for her, kept her in suspense several

ral months ; nor was the uncertainty of the young man as to the fate of his dear Peggy, much less painful : but it now drew near the time when this uncertainty should be removed.

C H A P. VII.

An unexpected interview.

HE one day received a letter from Mr. le Brun, the gentleman who had been his bedfellow at the house of Touch the bailiff, in which he apologized for his long silence, and informed him that he had been the greatest part of the time out of the kingdom, being obliged to go to France to his sister, who had found more difficulty in coming to the possession of her aunt's effects than she had at first apprehended, and invited him to his house the following day. Thither he went, and was introduced by a servant in livery into a handsome parlour : here he amused himself with looking at some prints, till his eyes were called off by the sound of a voice, which though what was said was in the French tongue, and to him unintelligible, informed him, that the speaker could be no other than the agreeable Miss Williams ! he listened, and found she was reading ; his attention was soon interrupted by the entrance of Mr. le Brun, who with a friendly air saluted him. It was Sunday, and consequently a day of leisure to Trueman : he needed not therefore much entreaty to be prevailed on to stay dinner ; he hoped to have seen the charmer of his heart, without being obliged to ask questions ; but no one appeared at table but Mr. le Brun and his lady, who seemed to vie with her husband in expressions of civility and friendship to their guest. The youth by degrees took courage from the freedom of their behaviour, to ask the gentleman, if the lady who had wrote the letter that had given him so much joy was come to England ? He was answered, that she was, and lived in the house ; but as she was a little indisposed, she chose to dine in her dressing-room. He then enquired after the welfare of
their

their daughter ; but still heard not the least mention of her that was uppermost in his heart. His own ideas of her dignity, made him forget that the humility of her station kept her from being a proper subject of conversation to the visitors of her mistress, who had too much humanity to make the failings of her servants, a theme on which to shew her wit, and contented herself with bestowing encouragement on those that behaved well, without making a parade of her generosity.

The hour of public service came, when Mr. le Brun proposed to Trueman to go to their parish church, saying with a smile, that he was an unfashionable fellow, and thought it full as reasonable to hear a sermon as to spend the time at cards or sleep, or even in chatting over a bottle, and added, ‘ as the legislator has not yet ‘ thought proper to shut up the doors of our almost ‘ empty churches, though the polite are of opinion, ‘ that Sunday lasts no longer than the morning service, ‘ I’ll give my company to the doctor, till I can find ‘ that only a fourteenth part of the week is to be set ‘ apart for the worship of that being, whose acceptance of our feeble devotions makes our highest happiness.’ Mrs. le Brun said she would stay at home with her sister, and let her maid go out ; and invited Trueman to return and drink tea. This invitation was unheard, for the voice again saluted his ears, and he beheld the charming Peggy before him ; she stood at the door, but the moment Trueman turned his face, at hearing her speak to her mistress, she disappeared ; he eagerly gazed after her with such an altered countenance, that both Mr. le Brun and his lady, were in fear for his health. He recollected himself as well as he was able, and began to enquire, if that young woman was her servant ? but his enquiries were interrupted by a bustle in the next room, and an eager cry for water, in broken English. This hurry sent them all to the place from whence they heard the cry ; here Mr. Trueman saw the amiable Peggy, senseless and pale, as if in the arms of death. He ran to her relief, and unmindful of appearances, laid her head against his

his breast, while the French lady, with great humanity, held a bottle to her nose, and used all means to bring her to herself. This in a little time was happily effected, and she opened her eyes on her deliverer; but instantly they were filled with tears. She struggled to get from his arms, while he, forgetful that he had witnesses of his behaviour, endeavoured to hold her with a gentle pressure, and whispered the softest accents of tenderness and love. She broke from him with precipitation, saying, 'It is not for me to hear this, from the lover of my benefactor and friend. You have saved me from destruction; do not lessen the obligation by false pretences.'

The strong emotion visible in her countenance while she spoke this, interested her master's sister in her happiness. That lady had herself experienced the tender pangs of love: she had known the bitterness of disappointed affection, and the griefs she had suffered, had had the happy effect of humanizing her mind, and rendering her more than commonly sympathizing in the miseries of her fellow-creatures, and consequently extremely solicitous for their happiness. This, together with a lively impulse she had felt in behalf of the unfortunate Peggy, from the first moment she had seen her, which her good sense and affability had improved to a reasonable affection, made her feel a good deal of curiosity to know her story. She saw, that however alert and ready the young woman appeared in the little offices of her present employment, that she was in a very different sphere of life from what her education promised. She once caught her playing, in her absence, on her harpsichord, with a masterly hand, and accompanying the instrument with her voice, in a manner that shewed the most consummate skill in music. This was the favourite amusement of the lady; she was pleased with so uncommon a qualification in a servant, and from that time purposed to place her in a station of more ease and leisure, if her conduct should justify such a step; but as in the little time she had had it in her power to be serviceable to others she had frequently been deceived, so as to bestow her bounty on

worthless objects ; she was resolved to observe the behaviour of Peggy some time before she put her designs in her favour in execution, and for the present contented herself with treating her with affability and condescension, without expressing any surprize at her genteel acquisitions, though she, the same day found out, that she understood French perfectly well, and had no small knowlege in the Italian.

This discovery was made but a few weeks before the sight of Trueman made poor Peggy betray her sensibility in the manner just mentioned ; but from this instant, the good lady dropp'd her caution, and the moment the weeping girl was able to attend to what she said, she insisted on knowing her story, and promised to be sincerely her friend, and to give her every relief in her power. She spoke in French ; and though Mr. Trueman knew not what she said, yet as he beheld a beam of joy lighted up in the eyes of his mistress, he could not help regarding the lady with a look of gratitude.

The confusion being now subsided, and Peggy in a condition that needed no assistance, the master of the house resumed his intention of going to church ; but both he and his lady advised Peggy to stay at home. This advice was seconded by the benevolent Mrs. Goodwin, who hoped to have her curiosity gratified as soon as her brother and sister were gone out. She was however very near being disappointed ; for the young man had almost worked himself up to the resolution of begging Mr. le Brun's permission, to spend an hour with his mistress in his absence ; but a cold forbidding look that froze his soul, met his eyes, and at once damped his resolution ; he hastened to fetch his hat out of the next room, and followed the old gentleman with precipitation, who was not a little pleased with his behaviour, as he expected he would have acted otherwise, and did not care for such an example in his house, lest it might have been improved into a precedent, and every maid in the family have taken the liberty of introducing her admirer in the time of public service.

While

While this worthy man and young Trueman were at church, Mrs. Goodwin exercised the compassion of her heart in weeping over the various calamities of Peggy Williams's life.

My reader has already heard all the particulars she related to the lady till her leaving her place in the Strand, and she could go no farther in her narrative at that time, as she expected her lady's return, and there was no other servant at home. There appeared something so extremely mysterious in the discovery of the villainy designed her by Mr. Symonds, and so romantic in the behaviour of Trueman, that, in spite of the candour of her own heart, and her prepossession for Peggy, Mrs. Goodwin could hardly persuade herself that she was not listening to some fabulous work of invention, and felt a slight suspicion that the heroine of the tale had exaggerated her dangers and hair-breadth escapes, in order to inspire her hearer with vast ideas of her importance, from the visible interpositions of providence in her favour. What contributed a good deal to lessen the credit of the story, was Peggy's being utterly unable to satisfy the lady's enquiries about the manner of the young man's becoming acquainted with the horrid conspiracy. My reader may remember that Trueman had barely time to inform her of her danger, before their conversation was interrupted by the officer's entrance into the house, and she had not set eyes on her deliverer, till she saw him that day with her master.

Mrs. Goodwin was ruminating on these circumstances, and had just determined to satisfy herself of the truth or falshood of the events from Trueman's own mouth, when her brother and sister returned, accompanied by the young man, who was left a short time in the parlour, where he had been in the morning. While Mr. and Mrs. le Brun went to pay their respects to Mrs. Goodwin, Peggy was ordered to prepare tea, and was therefore obliged again to encounter the eyes of Trueman: but as she had recalled to her memory while relating her misfortunes, the vast obligations she had to the youth, this entended her mind, and made her

incapable of wearing that look of indifference she had forced herself to put on immediately after her recovery out of the fainting fit; and which, though in vain, she still endeavoured to reassume. She had entered the room unobserved, and was reaching some cups from a *bouffet* near the chair, in which her lover sat in a profound revery, when his starting up and crying, 'Dear-est Peggy, your coldness is a dagger to my heart,' very nearly cost her mistress the best part of a fine set of China. The clutter she made in her endeavours to save the brittle superfluities, made him turn his head, when Peggy's fears of doing a mischief, that might cost her a good place, and the flutter of her spirits at the sound of his voice, gave a paleness to her countenance that well enough justified his catching her eagerly in his arms, as if to prevent her falling. She begged him to let her go, while he observing that her eyes had lost much of their severity, insisted on her appointing a time for the explanation of what she meant, by calling him the lover of any other woman, adding, that the whole sex was indifferent to him, till fortune, or more properly providence, brought her to his sight. 'Dear creature, continued he, do not use the power you have over my heart, to torment me by little coquetish arts; you have nothing to do but to tell me, my assiduities are displeasing to you, and I'll vent my complaints in secret; but if I am happy enough to have my services accepted, let not jealousy imbitter the delights of love.'

Peggy, in spite of her obligations, thought this declaration a little too free, as she had before that day, been but once in his company; however, she replied with much sweetness, that she had no design of giving pain to one to whom she owed every degree of happiness she did, or ever expected to enjoy. He was going to reply, when a bell called away his charmer. She instantly returned with an invitation for him to come into the next room: he obeyed the summons, and was introduced to Mrs. Goodwin.

Tea was no sooner over than that lady, with a designed abruptness, asked Trueman, how long he had
been

been acquainted with Peggy? He replied blushing, 'I hardly know, Madam, whether she will let me yet call myself her acquaintance.' 'No,' answered Mrs. Goodwin! why, she tells me she has the greatest obligations to you. I cannot think the girl ungrateful.' 'Accidental good offices, madam, he returned, do not demand much gratitude. I have nothing to plead, since I did no more than meer humanity required.' 'I wish, Sir, said the lady, you would favour me with the knowledge of, how you came acquainted with the designs of the base wretch: for plotters generally keep their intrigues secret from all but those who are necessary to put them in execution.'

This oblique hint reddened his cheek with indignation, and he answered with some heat, 'Indeed, madam, I am not the villain you seem to think me. I bless God, I was not of the number of their confidants. If Peggy harbours such uncharitable suspicions, 'tis no wonder that she treats me coldly.'

Mr. and Mrs. le Brun were not a little astonished at Mrs. Goodwin's bluntness; for she was naturally of a cast very different from what she now appeared. That air of candour with which Trueman vindicated himself, and the painful sensations that glowed in his countenance, disabled the good lady from carrying the dissimulation farther; and she replied with much frankness, that she was sorry to give him pain, and heartily asked pardon for the rudeness of her suspicion; but, she continued, 'I have, ever since I heard Peggy's account, puzzled my brain to no purpose, to find out who could be your informer, except it was the vile creatures themselves.' 'You are right, madam,' he replied, 'It was from them I learnt the design.' He then told them by what chance he heard them talking. The repetition of some circumstances Peggy had related, without the least variation, confirmed the truth of the whole, and in order to make amends for the unjust suspicions the good natured Mrs. Goodwin had conceived of the poor girl, she now more than ever resolved to be her protectress and friend. She even that very night begged her sister to provide herself

another servant, saying, the qualifications and distresses of Peggy had so unaccountably influenced her heart, that she determined to try all in her power to alleviate her misfortunes, and place her in such a situation as might justify her making her her companion, which she could not, consistent with the rules of decorum, while she was her domestic.

I should have told you, gentle reader, that Mr. Symonds kept up a decent regulation in his family, and laid it as a solemn injunction on his servants, to be all within on Sunday night by eight o'clock. Mr. Trueman had never deviated from this rule; and that he might give no umbrage to his master, conformed to it now, though he ardently longed to come to an explanation with the agreeable Peggy, who on her side, had by this time forgot all her jealous pride, and felt a high delight in her lover's having overcome the assumed roughness of Mrs. Goodwin, whose looks and manner of speaking to the youth were altered from a sort of stern ferocity, to the utmost complacency and condescension. She had an opportunity of observing the lady's eyes during tea-time, and had felt no little uneasiness at her apparent ill-humour; but when she heard her from the next room speak to Trueman in a manner so unpolite, that it might be called unmannerly, she felt sensations very contrary to those she had been used to experience in behalf of this benevolent lady. The timidity with which he spoke prevented her hearing his replies, till his passions being raised by a virtuous indignation, elevated his voice. It was then, if not before, she knew she loved; she rejoiced in his vindicating himself with so much spirit, and found the courage to make an errand into the room to observe his looks. The young man cast a glance at her, that told her, as plain as words could, that her suspicions, for he believed them hers, cruelly wronged him; she did not stay a moment in his sight, but took care not to lose a syllable of what he said, in all which she thought herself intimately concerned, and saw fresh reason for gratitude to heaven, for her escape, as well as for affectionate

fectionate thankfulness to her preserver, who, in his narration, spoke of her in terms that were extremely flattering to her self-love, and almost persuaded her, that what she had heard of his attachment to another, was entirely false. While filled with these agreeable hopes, her employment called her to another part of the house, and before her return to the parlour, Trueman, to her great disappointment, had taken his leave.

At his departure, he asked permission of Mr. le Brun to wait on him again, saying, he had a favour to beg, but chose to defer it till the next day, as he had already a little exceeded his time : Mr. le Brun rightly judged, that this favour was no other than his leave to visit Peggy ; for the old gentleman, at the noise made by the tea-cups, one of which was broke on the floor, had hastily stepped to the parlour-door, just at the instant when Trueman had seized the affrighted Peggy in his arms. He saw rather than heard the pathetic address he made to her ; for he stood not to listen : the candour of his heart appeared in his look, and the discerning Mr. le Brun had not the least doubt of his sincerity ; but as he was a stranger to the sentiments of his maid, he would have been embarrassed what answer to give him, had he told him his request. The odd circumstances that had concurred in the preservation of the afflicted Peggy, raised the curiosity of her master and mistress to hear her whole story. Mrs. Goodwin gave them the recital from her memory, as far as she knew it, and Peggy was called in to give them the rest, which shall be the subject of my next chapter.

C H A P. VIII.

The continuation of Peggy Williams's persecution and strange distresses.

MR S. Goodwin told Peggy she might begin where she left off ; for she had herself informed her brother and sister of the most material events of her life,

life, till she was turned out of doors by her mistress. The poor girl was in some confusion at this order ; but the compassion and benevolence visible in the countenances of her audience, quickly dissipated her uneasiness, and she began, addressing herself to her master's sister, in the following manner.

‘ I was now, madam, in the utmost horror at my situation, bereft of every comfort, without friends, without a habitation, without a character, and almost without money or cloaths, for I had very little but what I had on my back, and was that night obliged to change the guinea Miss Symonds had given me, to pay for my lodging. My landlady seeing me weep, expressed a great deal of compassion for me, asked me the cause of my grief, and offered to lend me her assistance in so friendly a manner, that I could not help letting her into part of my calamity, particularly my being afraid, that my want of a recommendation would hinder my getting a place. She laughed at my fears, and told me such a flighty girl as I was carried her recommendation along with her any where. Ignorant of the arts and vices of mankind, I imagined she meant, that I seemed to be able to perform the domestic duties of a servant, and felt some little relief from the reflection, that a woman of her age and experience thought so ; but alas, I was not long to seek for her meaning. In the afternoon of the following day, she came into my room, as she said, to ask me if I understood plain-work ? When I told her I did, she answered briskly, then you need not be anxious about a place ; for a cousin of my own is this morning come to town, and designs to lodge in my dining-room ; and what with attending him and needle-work, we shall find enough to do for us both, while he stays. I was not greatly pleased with the look of this woman ; therefore resolved to be on my guard against her cousin, whom I had not seen ; but though I was in terror at I knew not what, I could not resolve to leave her house, till I was sure my suspicions did not wrong her. In the evening a hackney coach stopped
‘ at

‘ at the door, out of which bolted a sprightly young
 ‘ fellow, drest extremely gay ; he saluted his cousin
 ‘ with a freedom that was very near rudeness, and
 ‘ ambling up to me, seized one of my hands, crying,
 ‘ in bad French, “ by heaven, an angel,” and then in
 ‘ English, “ by your leave, Miss,” and gave me a
 ‘ rude boisterous kiss. As soon as I could disengage
 ‘ myself, I ran up to my own room, fully resolved to
 ‘ fly, if I could not otherwise avoid this man ; for I
 ‘ began to have the most terrible apprehensions of the
 ‘ nods and shrugs of my landlady. Supper-time came,
 ‘ and the old woman first called, and then came up to
 ‘ ask me, why I shut myself up mopeing alone, “ I
 ‘ have, says she, drest my cousin a veal cutlet for his
 ‘ supper ; but he refuses to eat, unless you come
 ‘ down. I can tell you your pretty face has done
 ‘ miracles on his heart ; he has been talking this two
 ‘ hours of your beauty ; and swears, if his father was
 ‘ dead, he would lay a good two thousand a year at
 ‘ your feet. Don’t be a fool, and stand in your own
 ‘ light ; such lovers are not to be found every day.”
 ‘ I begged her to leave me, and go down to her sup-
 ‘ per, for I wanted no lover.’ “ Adds bobs,” said
 ‘ she, stamping with her foot,’ “ no lover ! you may
 ‘ tell an old woman so ; but my cousin, I warrant,
 ‘ will find you in another story before to-morrow
 ‘ morning.” ‘ I had not time to express my astonish-
 ‘ ment at her impudence, before I found that the stamp
 ‘ was a concerted signal for her cousin, as she called
 ‘ him, to appear, who entered the room, and taking
 ‘ hold of the hind-part of my neck, sang, in an as-
 ‘ sured voice, *Prythee, Cynthia, look behind thee, age
 ‘ and wrinkles will o’ertake thee.* I instantly turned,
 ‘ with an intent to run out of the room ; but found my-
 ‘ self locked in by the vile woman, who I heard mut-
 ‘ ter, as she went down stairs, “ Scornful trollop, I
 ‘ shall find a way to tame you.” ‘ I endeavoured to
 ‘ throw up the sash : but it was fastened in such a
 ‘ manner that I could not undo it. The villain set
 ‘ himself down in a chair, with the utmost compo-
 ‘ sure, and regarded me, while I was raving, till I

‘ was almost choaked with passion, with a sneer of
‘ contempt, saying, “ You throw out so many attrac-
‘ tions, child, in your anger, that I shall have hardly
‘ patience to stay for your kind consent to make me
‘ happy.” ‘ This, if possible, encreased my fears,
‘ as it shewed a determined resolution to ruin me,
‘ though it suggested to my mind a hint, that I might,
‘ by a pretended compliance, possibly escape. Though
‘ I detest dissimulation, the horror of my situation
‘ would have made me make this attempt; but a
‘ loud knocking, gave me far better hopes of deli-
‘ verance. The old woman instantly unlocked the
‘ door of the room, and I ran down stairs with the
‘ utmost precipitation, but was intercepted in my
‘ flight by five men, who met me at the bottom of the
‘ stairs, and insisted on my going up again to be ex-
‘ amined. I screamed for help, believing that these
‘ men were the accomplices of him I left above. My
‘ cries brought in several persons from the street, who
‘ only shook their heads, without offering me the least
‘ assistance. My ruin now seemed inevitable; I threw
‘ myself on my knees, and endeavoured to mollify
‘ those who filled me with such terror, by my tears and
‘ entreaties; but not all my arguments could prevail
‘ on them to let me go; on the contrary, my resistance
‘ seemed to make them more resolutely bent on de-
‘ taining me. In spite of my struggling, crying and
‘ beseeching, I was dragged, or rather carried up
‘ stairs, and almost undressed by two of the men, while
‘ the other three searched every hole and corner of the
‘ house, ripped open my bed, my pillow and bolster,
‘ and threw the feathers about the room. The horror
‘ of my mind, and the violent efforts I had made to
‘ get loose, at last exhausted my strength, and I fell
‘ senseless on the floor. On my returning to myself,
‘ I found these two men using every method to restore
‘ me to life; and I no sooner opened my eyes, than
‘ they expressed their amazement at my terror, en-
‘ deavoured to comfort me, and asked, why I had
‘ been so affrighted, if I had nothing to lose? At this
‘ instant, my apprehensions were changed into a wild
‘ astonish-

' astonishment, which was increased by my hearing
 ' the noise the other three made in bringing down my
 ' landlady's cousin, who had fled through the sky light
 ' over the tops of the houses. I now saw, that I had
 ' taken my best friends for my enemies, and that these
 ' were custom-house officers, who had received in-
 ' telligence of a noted smuggler's having made the
 ' house of my wicked landlady, the repository of his
 ' unlawful treasure, which chiefly consisted of lace
 ' and linen. My being so roughly handled, was oc-
 ' casioned by their thinking me one of the family;
 ' from whence they entertained a suspicion, that I
 ' might probably have a quantity of the first of these
 ' goods concealed in my cloaths; for they had no
 ' hopes of meeting with the smuggler himself; but the
 ' neighbours, who, as it was a bright moon-light
 ' night, saw the gay spark on the top of the house,
 ' directed their search, and the villain, who had just
 ' before filled me with the extremest terror, was brought
 ' down trembling and pale, just as I came to myself.
 ' This unexpected turn of affairs filled me with joy
 ' and gratitude: I blessed providence for this season-
 ' able relief, and as soon as I had put on my cloaths,
 ' left the house.

' As my cries and the disturbance occasioned by the
 ' officers, had excited the curiosity of the neighbours, I
 ' was no sooner in the street, than the mistress of a
 ' coffee-house opposite to the place that had been the
 ' scene of all this confusion, called me in, enquired in-
 ' to the cause of the treatment I had met with, and on
 ' my giving a faithful account of what had passed,
 ' conceived such compassion for me, as to interest her-
 ' self in my affairs; and finding that I was destitute of
 ' a lodging, told me, that I might stay there all night.
 ' This was a favour which I gladly accepted, as it was
 ' then very late, and as I was still very much disor-
 ' dered.

' In the morning I found that my deliverance had
 ' been attended with a loss, which however trifling in-
 ' itself, was to me the cause of the keenest anxiety;
 ' for by my being tumbled about in searching for the
 ' lace,

lace, I lost half a guinea out of my pocket. This accident reduced my whole stock to less than seven shillings ; and I had the additional misfortune of being extremely ill, occasioned I suppose, by the terror and affright I had undergone the preceding day. I talked of my loss to the mistress of the house, who shewed me much compassion, made me the proposal of my staying with her, to do the needle-work of the family. To this I had no other objection, than the house being so public ; for wretched as I was, I had still left some remembrance, of what I once hoped to be ; and chose, if possible to hide my indigence from the world ; which, I believed I should not be able to do in such a place. I however thanked her, and took a few hours to deliberate on her offer. I now grew so very ill, that I had no choice to make : I was unable to hold my head from the pillow, and before night had lost my senses by the violence of my fever. I can never enough acknowledge the kindness and care of the good woman of the house, to me a wretched friendless stranger. On my regaining the use of my reason, I found that no necessary care had been wanting to restore me to health ; however, I recovered slowly, and was several months before I was well enough to think of another place, during which time, I was employed out of sight in such little offices as suited the present weakness of my constitution : my good-natured mistress always making a distinction between me and the other servants.

One day almost every room of the house was full, and some gay sparks bolted into the room where I was at work. I, as it was always my custom, went away ; but was obliged to go thro' another room full of company, to get to that I generally sat in. I made all the haste I could, and as much as possible hid my face from the gentlemen, lest some one might see me, who had known me in better times ; but notwithstanding this precaution, I was known by an intimate acquaintance of my father's, who followed me out of the room, and called me by my name ; I could hardly speak for tears. He seemed to pity my
distress,

' distress, and gave me a guinea. After this there was
 ' scarce a day passed, in which this charitable gentle-
 ' man did not spend some time in the house ; but still
 ' I kept out of sight, till at last he asked my mistress
 ' to let him speak to me. I was called down ; but
 ' the astonishment I felt can't be described, when I
 ' heard this intimate friend of my father's offer to take
 ' me into keeping ; alledging, that he loved me on my
 ' father's account, as well as for my being the pret-
 ' tiest girl he knew. In spite of my having received
 ' an obligation from him, I uttered every thing that
 ' could shew my indignation at this proposal, and left
 ' him, without waiting his reply : but I soon found I
 ' had better have concealed my resentment, or at least
 ' its warmth ; for though he came no more himself, I
 ' had reason to believe that he in revenge, told all he
 ' knew, where I was, since I seldom passed a day, with-
 ' out hearing I had been asked for by the name of
 ' Peggy Williams ; and my mistress was often witness
 ' to my being treated behind my back, by coxcombs,
 ' who perhaps had never seen me, with an impudent
 ' freedom, pitying my present situation, with all the
 ' insolence of contempt, and proposing to shew their
 ' companions my unhappy person ; believing, that be-
 ' cause necessity obliged me to live in this house, I
 ' was mortified down to the meanness, of becoming
 ' a part of the entertainment of every guest who should
 ' desire it.

' While I was in this uneasy situation, I met with
 ' an offer, that would have removed every care, had
 ' I been capable of honestly accepting it. This was
 ' from the apothecary, who attended me in my illness :
 ' pleased with what he had seen of my behaviour, and
 ' influenced by what he heard my mistress say of my
 ' reserve ; he with great frankness told me, that if I
 ' thought I could be happy with a man of his years
 ' (he being full fifty) he should think the preserving so
 ' much innocence and beauty from distress, an action
 ' that would give him pleasure on reflection, and sweet-
 ' ten the infirmities of old age itself. As he did not in
 ' this

‘ this declaration mention marriage, I was at a loss, whether to thank him for his kind intentions, or treat him like one, who would betray me to worse misery, than he pretended to be desirous of delivering me from ; but he soon relieved me from my embarrassment, by telling me, if he might interpret my silence, according to the old proverb, into consent, he would salute me by the name of Mrs. Phial ; and the next morning should give me an undoubted title to whatever he possessed. I returned him the most grateful thanks ; but told him, I had an insuperable objection to the acceptance of his offer, and such as he himself, I was sure, would think so.’ Here Peggy blushed extremely, and seemed at a loss how to go on with her relation : when she had recollected herself, she would have avoided mentioning what this objection was, but her master, who now began to be interested in the events of her life, took care that she should not pass over so material a circumstance, and cried out, ‘ But, Peggy, you have forgot to be as obliging to us, as I suppose you was to your old lover. What was this mighty objection, pray ?’ The poor girl’s confusion and blushes increased at this question, and she remained silent till Mrs. Goodwin gave her confidence, by saying, that if she was prepossessed in favour of another, she was right to refuse him. She then took courage to say, ‘ Since you oblige me, Sir, to speak, I had some months before this, seen the only man, whom I thought could make me happy. This I told the apothecary, and he was satisfied with my reason, and never once tried to make me alter my resolution. Soon after this he retired from trade, and went into the country ; but the morning before he set out, he came to take leave of my mistress, and at his departure put into my hand, a paper, which inclosed a bank note of twenty pounds, bidding me preserve that integrity of heart, which made me more amiable than youth or beauty.

‘ I was now almost well, and as Mr. Phial’s bounty enabled me to wait for a place, I determined to go a little way out of town, till my health should be entirely

‘ tirely re-established ; and then endeavour, by the interest of my kind mistress, to get an upper-maid’s place in some family, where I should not be exposed to the sight of much company ; for no part of my distresses, except where my innocence was endangered, gave me half the pain I felt from the insolent pity of those whom I used to look on as my equals ; as I almost always found that pity expressed in terms that tended more to increase my mortification, than alleviate my misfortunes.

‘ The day before that in which I was to go away, one of our waiters was missing, and a strict search was made after the plate, lest he should have converted some of that to his use. I with the utmost diligence accompanied my mistress in this enquiry, intirely forgetful of my own little treasure ; but going some hours after to put on clean linen, I found my box broke open, and my note gone. My mistress was in tears for several things of value that were missing ; but I no sooner appeared before her, pale and without a cap, then she lost all thoughts of her own misfortune, in her care for me. A violent fit of crying gave me ease, and made me capable of letting her know what had happened ; but from that time, I never heard her repine at what had befallen herself, or mention it, except it was in thankfulness, that the wretch had not been permitted to strip the house. The example of this worthy woman, set me on comparing my present situation with what it had been ; and this comparison by degrees restored my mind to tranquillity and ease.

‘ A few days after my loss, I saw my mother pass by the house where I lived : in spite of her cruel treachery, my heart informed me that I loved her ; she seemed in want, and that was enough, to make me forget all my resentment. I knew where an intimate friend of her’s lived ; but though I did not like this woman well enough to trust her with my retreat, I sent a trifle to her, inclosed in a letter to my mother, for whose use I designed it. I wrote to her by this conveyance

‘ conveyance several times ; but my messenger, who
‘ was a niece of my mistress’s, and one whom I could
‘ trust, was directed by a girl that she had never seen
‘ before, to the house of Mr. Symonds, the gentleman
‘ who had conspired with this unkind parent to ruin
‘ me, where she was told my mother lived. I was ex-
‘ tremely shocked at this intelligence, as it made it im-
‘ possible for me to think she had repented of her guilt ;
‘ but the next day I found I had reason to be alarmed
‘ on my own account, for I narrowly escaped being
‘ seen by Mr. Symonds, whom I beheld watching
‘ our windows. I kept close, not daring to look out,
‘ and lived in the greatest terror of this man several
‘ days, when my mistress pitying my distress, wrote to
‘ her sister, who lived a little way out of town, and
‘ desired her to employ me in her family, till I could
‘ suit myself. I was the bearer of this letter, in which
‘ I was so warmly recommended, that I received a
‘ friendly welcome from this gentlewoman, who was
‘ lately left a widow, and depended on letting lodg-
‘ ings for a maintenance. Her house was at this time
‘ full, and she had business enough to employ me,
‘ without its being an injury to herself : a circumstance
‘ that gave me great pleasure.

‘ Here I hoped to possess that ease of mind that had
‘ long been a stranger to my bosom ; but this hope was
‘ cruelly disappointed, since I had not been three days
‘ in the house, before I saw my persecutor Mr. Sy-
‘ monds, come out of a coach at the gate. I ran into
‘ a parlour time enough to prevent my being seen ; but
‘ no mortal can express the agitation I suffered, while
‘ he stood talking to my mistress in the entry. I expected
‘ every moment to hear myself asked for ; and I believe,
‘ so great was my terror, I should that instant have run
‘ out of the house, if I could have done it without be-
‘ ing seen. My disorder was too great to be conceal’d,
‘ and my mistress, on her coming into the room, en-
‘ quired with a good deal of anxiety in her looks, if I
‘ was subject to fits. I was scarce able to answer her ;
‘ but a young woman who was in the parlour, unknown
‘ to me when I entered it in a wild affright, did it for
me,

‘ me, by telling her she believed I had met with some
 ‘ surprise. However, I soon found that my fears were
 ‘ without foundation, and that the terrible Mr. Symonds knew nothing of my being there, and came
 ‘ only to see his daughter, who I was informed was in
 ‘ the house, in so ill a state of health, that her recovery
 ‘ was very doubtful.

‘ This young lady was really very dear to me ; she
 ‘ had shewn a sincere desire to serve me, and I could
 ‘ not hear of her being in this situation, without
 ‘ shedding tears. This sign of my sensibility did not
 ‘ escape the notice of the young woman, whom I afterwards found was Miss Symonds’s maid ; and while I
 ‘ was revolving in my mind, in what manner to introduce myself to the sick young lady, when her father
 ‘ should be gone, I received a message from her, to attend her in the evening. I found her very much surprised at my being there ; and instead of that open
 ‘ frank air, that I expected from an old friend and companion, she received me with a cold constrained look,
 ‘ that gave me the utmost mortification. I even beheld
 ‘ her let fall some tears ; but they were not the tears of
 ‘ pity ; they appeared to me to flow from some hidden
 ‘ cause, as she took the utmost pains to conceal them.
 ‘ I heard no more of an invitation to her father’s house,
 ‘ and I even fancied my company was become distasteful.
 ‘ I was in hopes she would have enquired into the reason
 ‘ of my having refused her offer, and promised myself
 ‘ great relief in unbosoming all my griefs to a friend,
 ‘ who, I was sure, would at least pity me. Prodigious
 ‘ ly disgusted at her behaviour, I soon took my
 ‘ leave. This fresh wound to my pride and affection ;
 ‘ for I still found the power of friendship, though fortune had made us so unequal, kept me the whole
 ‘ night waking, and gave me almost the keenest heart-
 ‘ ach I had ever felt.

‘ Several hours before the time of rising, I received a
 ‘ second summons from my friend, which, in spite of
 ‘ my regard for her, I had almost a mind to refuse complying with ; but on her maid’s telling me that her
 ‘ lady

' lady was to go to town the next day, and earnestly
 ' begged to speak with me, I followed her, as soon as I
 ' could slip on my cloaths, into her mistress's chamber.
 ' Miss Symonds seemed to be visibly altered for the
 ' worse, since I left her the night before : she desired
 ' me to sit near her bed-side ; and, as soon as her maid
 ' was withdrawn, began to apologize for her last night's
 ' conduct in a manner perfectly consistent with the na-
 ' tural humanity and goodness of her heart. I begged
 ' her to give herself no pain on that account ; for her
 ' present behaviour had made me forget it. Her an-
 ' swer to me was, " O Peggy, there is a cause, but it
 " must die with me, since the only person I would
 " chuse to trust, is become the most unfit to be my con-
 " fident ; bear with the weakness of a friend ; and if
 " you value my peace, ask me not what I mean : the
 " principal reason for my sending for you now, was,
 " to assure you, I have still Miss Williams very near my
 " heart, though I can't make her the offer contained
 " in this letter."

' She then put into my hand a letter, directed to me
 ' at my place in the Strand, which contained an invi-
 ' tation to live with her in a state of equality in her fa-
 ' ther's house. The friendly manner in which she had
 ' expressed herself in this letter, awaked all my grati-
 ' tude and love. I told her what I felt, at least as far
 ' as words could do it, and then added, " Whatever,
 " dear Miss, are your reasons for altering your mind,
 " and now thinking it improper for me to live with
 " you, I am sure they cannot be of greater force
 " than those I have to refuse it, was it still your wish."
 ' She replied with some emotion, " Perhaps our rea-
 " sons are the same : I should take it kind, if you would
 ' let me into yours." ' After I had entreated her to
 ' recollect if she had, in all the happy days we had
 ' passed together, known me guilty of a wilful false-
 ' hood ; and begged her to forget that the person I ac-
 ' cused, had a right to her reverence and love, I gave
 ' her a minute and circumstantial account of my being
 ' supported by her father, and of the many attempts he
 ' had made use of to subdue my will to his purpose ;
 ' but

but when I came to the contrivance of ruining me by force, the heart of this dutiful girl appeared in her countenance, and she cried out in a perfect agony, "O Peggy! remember he is still my father. I cannot bear to hear any more of this horrid story, though I have many reasons to believe it true. All I want to know is, how you came acquainted with the young man that informed you of your danger." I told her, I had never seen him before or since, and was quite at a loss to guess by what means he knew any thing of me or my affairs. This declaration seemed to affect her very sensibly, and she asked with eagerness, if I did not wish to see this generous youth? I replied blushing, that I should be glad to thank him for so uncommon an obligation. "Ah, Peggy!" she returned, "there is, I believe, more of love than gratitude in that wish." I answered, a little nettled at her observation, that I hoped I should never hold my heart so loosely, as to part with it before it was asked for. She blushed extremely red at this pert reply, said she was quite spent with talking, and, after having made me a present of two guineas, dismissed me, and I saw her no more; for she went to town the same day.

I was by no means satisfied with the treatment I received from this lady, which appeared to be an odd mixture of friendship and indifference, endeavouring to search into my sentiments, while she, with the greatest care concealed her own.

When she had been gone about a month, her maid came to see for some trifle she had left behind her. My mistress, whose only fault was a restless curiosity, that led her to the meanness of making an acquaintance with the servants of her lodgers, in order to get an insight into their affairs, invited this young woman to drink tea with her; when I learnt that it was now discovered, that her young mistress's distemper proceeded from love, and was in a fair way to be cured, by her being married to her father's clerk. My mistress, as she had before fancied this to be her case, triumphed in her own sagacity; and she and the maid

now

‘ now sat in judgment on the person who had caused so
 ‘ much perturbation in the heart of a pretty lady, whose
 ‘ natural endowments and prospects of fortune, they
 ‘ observed, might command almost any body. My
 ‘ mistress, who had once seen him, said he was an a-
 ‘ greeable modest looking youth ; but she should never
 ‘ have suspected him of making conquests.’ Conquests,
 answered the maid, “ why, Madam, if you had seen
 “ him, when he first came into the family, he was the
 “ aukwardest country booby that ever you beheld. I
 “ shall never forget the figure he made the night my
 “ master hired him ; he looked for all the world, as if
 “ he had been frightened out of his wits. I little thought
 “ that such a queer thing would have been our master ;
 “ but some people have strange fancies. I could tell
 “ my lady something that I heard pass between my
 “ master and a man that came to our house, that’s not
 “ much to this young man’s honour ; but I have no
 “ business to get ill will to myself ; for I suppose, now
 “ her heart is fixed, she would have him if he had
 “ been in Newgate ; so I’ll e’en say nothing.” ‘ My
 ‘ mistress having thus got something to talk on that
 ‘ wore the face of a secret, could not be easy till she
 ‘ had wormed out the whole ; which indeed amounted
 ‘ to no more than that the young man had, on his first
 ‘ coming to London, been confined in the Round-house,
 ‘ for striking another man about a girl. It was to them
 ‘ a confused story, that they knew not what to make
 ‘ of ; but to me it was plain, that this favourite youth
 ‘ was my generous deliverer. Should I say, madam,’
 she continued, with her eyes cast down on the floor,
 ‘ that I rejoiced at his good fortune, I should belie the
 ‘ sensations of my heart ; for I was so extremely un-
 ‘ easy, that I was obliged to go out of the room,
 ‘ and therefore heard no more ; however, on reflection,
 ‘ I found reason to acquit Miss Symonds of unkind-
 ‘ ness ; as I now saw the cause of all the oddities in her
 ‘ behaviour ; and this thought as I still loved her, was
 ‘ not a little pleasing.

‘ My friend’s servant, delighted I suppose, at my
 ‘ mistress’s indulging her in her vein of talking, came
 ‘ frequently

‘ frequently to our house, when Mr. Trueman and her young lady was always the subject. One time she wondered what they waited for, and at another, suggested that possibly some country girl might be in the way, whom it might take some time to buy off; it never once entering into her head, that any former engagement could be of force enough to withstand the great fortune of Miss Symonds.

‘ As I found myself very much affected with what concerned the young lady and her lover, and that every time this talkative girl came, I grew more and more uneasy, though I could hardly tell for what, I gave my mistress warning, telling her, I did not chuse to stay in the country the winter. She was kind enough to give me a character, that induced you, madam,’ said she, turning to her mistress, ‘ to accept of my service: and I should, I believe, have soon been made easy and happy by the goodness of you and your sister, though Mr. Trueman had been married to Miss Symonds, if I could have kept myself out of his sight.’

After she had ended her relation, she was informed of the kind intentions of Mrs. Goodwin, and of Trueman’s coming the following day. Her thoughts were so much engrossed by the last article, that she had almost forgot to pay her acknowledgments to her new patroness; however, on the good lady’s saying, that she need no longer look on herself as a servant; for she hoped her future conduct would be such as would justify her, in chusing her for a friend and companion, she, as soon as she could restrain the starting tear of gratitude and joy, replied, ‘ O Madam, you must forgive my inability to thank you as I ought. It has often been the secret wish of my soul that providence had seen fit to have given her that had brought me into the world, a mind like yours, though in the meanest station; then, I imagine, affection and duty would have sweetened labour, and reconciled me to servitude. The only return in my power to make, is from a full heart, to offer you all the love and reverence I should have owed to such a parent.’ Mrs. Goodwin

Goodwin seemed perfectly pleased with this expression of thankfulness, and promised to treat her with the same freedom as if she had been her own child, only adding, that she did not mean by this promise, to make her appear to the world in that character, because her niece had an undoubted right to the principal part of her fortune. 'And indeed, Peggy,' she continued, 'I think it would, on second thoughts, be better to wear the appearance of a servant a little longer, till I remove from my sister's; and then you may assure yourself, I shall take care to place you in a more agreeable situation.' This last proposal removed from Peggy's mind, a good deal of care in relation to the manner in which she ought to behave in this family; and she cheerfully performed her present duty, without shewing either haughtiness to her fellow-servants, on account of her approaching good fortune, or an insolent freedom to her mistress or her sister, one of which is a too frequent consequence of kindness and good nature to inferiors, especially if it be expressed with that condescending frankness, that an open temper is apt to use when it takes a pleasure in obliging.

C H A P. IX.

Frights, flutters, uneasinesses, and idle tittle-tattle.

WHEN the whole family were retired to rest, Mrs. Goodwin, on hearing the sighs of Peggy, who had been her bedfellow ever since she was ill, began to enquire very minutely into the situation of her heart, and said, 'I fancy, Peggy, you have one care that is out of my power to remove. I was loth to give you confusion before my brother, who, perhaps would have bantered you on your being in love; but I fear the young man has made an impression on your mind, that will, if he is in reality Miss Symonds's lover, in a great measure frustrate my design of making you happy. I confess there is in his look an air of candour and honesty, that pleases me; but I myself am a melancholy evidence, how little such looks are to be trusted. I don't attempt to persuade you not
' to

' to love ; for that I know, would be in vain : but if
 ' my fears are true, take care of nourishing that love
 ' with false hopes ; know the worst you have to expect
 ' at once, and if the fortune of Miss Symonds in-
 ' fluences him in her favour ; (for by the little I have
 ' seen of him, I believe, were you equal, you would
 ' be his choice) give him up without reproaches : and
 ' above all things, avoid letting him know the design-
 ' ed alteration in your circumstances, lest you should
 ' have the pain of thinking, you owe any part of his
 ' regard to that. If he loves you, he will ask my bro-
 ' ther to let him visit you. Tell him frankly what you
 ' have heard ; for you had better lament the cold lover,
 ' than the discontented husband ; and if he knows no-
 ' thing yet of the impression he has made on the young
 ' lady, should he marry you, people would be forward
 ' enough to tell him of it, and to upbraid him with
 ' being blind to his own interest. Don't imagine that
 ' his love to you will make him unconcerned at these
 ' upbraidings ; the thoughts of the affluence he has
 ' lost, may imbitter every present enjoyment, and
 ' make even you distasteful, which would be infinitely
 ' worse than any thing you could feel at parting with
 ' him now.'

Peggy saw the force of these reasonings, and deter-
 mined, the first time she had an opportunity, to speak
 to him about Miss Symonds, in such a manner, as
 would render it impossible for him to evade giving her
 an answer, that would confirm or remove her fears.
 While the consideration in what manner to put her re-
 solution in practice, took up all her thoughts, and pre-
 vented her closing her eyes, Trueman's rest was disturb-
 ed by reflections of a very different nature. On his re-
 turn home he had made no secret of the place where
 he dined, and spent part of the day ; but he had hard-
 ly mentioned the name of Mr. le Brun, before the al-
 teration of Miss Symonds's complexion alarmed the
 whole family. No one but the young lady herself knew
 the cause of this change, not even her father could get
 from her what it was that gave her pain, and very
 probably it would have remained for ever a secret, had
 it

it not been discovered by the maid's saying, ' My mistress is of such a compassionate temper that she makes every one's case her own ; and there lives at the house where Mr. Trueman says he has been to-day, a young woman who was at school with her when she was a child ; and this poor creature, my lady has told me, has gone through a vast deal of trouble ; though I can't see why she should be so uneasy for her, now she has the happiness to have got into a good family. To say the truth, she is very pretty.' She was going on with her wise remarks, when Mr. Trueman, with the utmost impatience of look and voice, asked her what she had to do with that young woman, and why she made so free with her character and affairs ? ' I have nothing to do with her, not I,' was replied with as much vehemence ; ' but I am afraid some folks have more to do with her than they ought to have, or they would not be so angry for a word speaking.' She was bid to hold her tongue ; but her passions were of too high an order to be under the controul of her mistress, and though she did not now speak so loud as before, she muttered, ' Marry come up, free indeed ! I say free too : free to a coffee-house wench.' She was now ordered to leave the room. This she did ; but as she went out, she cast a glance of contempt at Trueman, and grumbled something about a beggar's being set on horse-back, and the pride of low-born wretches, when their superiors made them their companions. The young man had always behaved with civility to all the servants, and particularly to this girl, who was the favourite of her mistress, for whom he had a very high esteem ; but he was now so much nettled, that unmindful of the request of Miss Symonds, he followed her out, and haughtily enough asked her, what she meant by those opprobrious epithets, and by her insinuation concerning Miss Williams ? ' I know nothing of any misses, not I,' was answered with a spiteful sneer. ' The creature that I meant, was taken out of charity by the woman that kept the lodging house where my lady was when she was sick : but I suppose you know
' more

‘ more of her than I can tell you. I’m sure, if some people saw with my eyes, other people should have the dirt they liked, and I’d not disorder myself about it.’

This, as she spoke loud, and was in the next room to that where her mistress sat, was overheard by the young lady, who immediately rang a bell for her to come to her; and on her appearance, commanded her either to silence her impertinent tongue, or leave the house immediately. To this she replied with great pertness, what she pleased, for she had hitherto been commanded by her betters, and would not submit to e’er a fellow servant in England, though all the ladies in the world were dying for him. It is impossible to describe the agitation of the poor lady’s mind at this malicious discovery of her secret: she blushed with indignation and shame, and was too much mortified, even to shew her anger. Her father saw her distress, and gave an instant discharge to the ungrateful hussy that caused it; but what she had said, opened the eyes of young Trueman: he now perfectly understood what Peggy Williams meant by calling him the lover of her benefactor and friend. At first he very likely found the affection of a young lady of Miss Symonds’s beauty and fortune, very flattering to his self-love and vanity; but the natural probity of his heart, strengthened by a right education, made him soon see what was the part he ought to act: he found that the unfortunate Miss Williams possessed his heart, and therefore scorned to make so ungrateful a return to the condescension of Miss Symonds, as to offer her his hand without it: but to continue in the house after she must know that he was not ignorant of her sensibility in his favour, he thought would be impossible; yet in what manner to leave it he knew not. I have already said, that he was indebted to his master; but this was not his only obstacle, he had contracted with him for a certain time that wanted some months of being expired; the old gentleman had lately behaved extremely kind to him, and had made him acquainted with some of the methods of trade; and he imagined he would resent his going from him as an injury to his affairs.

THE
HISTORY
OF
JOSHUA TRUEMAN.
BOOK II.
CHAPTER I.

Mr. Trueman receives an offer, that if accepted, would make him appear in a more amiable light to such of our readers as are frequently heard to pronounce *low stuff, mean characters, &c.*

THE thoughts with which Trueman's mind was agitated, kept him all night without sleep; but his cares and perplexities were the next morning much increased, on his being told, that the young lady was too ill to leave her bed, and that his master had given orders for him to attend him. Mr. Symonds received him in the dining-room with a gloomy thoughtful look, and on the young man's saying, he was informed he wanted him, he answered, 'I did so; it was to ask you, on what terms you stand with Mr. le Brun's maid, for whom you was so stout a champion. As the girl was gone, I did not trouble you with my thanks for opposing an officer who acted by my authority. I was in hopes your own reflections would have taught you better, than to have followed one who has nothing to recommend her but a handsome person. I had even designs in your behalf, that would have made your fortune.'

Trueman,

Trueman, though he dreaded what he was going to say, returned him thanks for his concern for his interest; and said that he did not go after the young woman, nor knew where she lived till the day before. Mr. Symonds now assumed a look of kindness, and told him: if he would give him his word not to concern himself any more with Peggy Williams, he would make him an offer far beyond his hopes. Trueman continued silent, and he went on, 'if my Charlotte's person and fortune, is worth your acceptance, and can erase out of your mind this pretty beggar, I will this instant call you my son.' He still held down his head without making the least reply, till his master in a voice of thunder stormed out, 'What! is my condemnation not worth an answer?' Is my daughter 'to be despised by you?' 'Far from it, Sir,' he returned in a fearful accent, 'I have the highest esteem for the many perfections of Miss Charlotte; and am thoroughly sensible of the blessing offered me: but!'—'But what? why, you're in love up to the ears with Peggy Williams, so you will wisely slight, what many young fellows of fortune would jump at: though you can't have what you wish, without being reduced to the utmost wretchedness. Your father will be undoubtedly very much pleased at the prudence of his son, who takes such wise methods to encrease the wealth and honour of his family. I give you four and twenty hours to consider of what I propose; but insist, that in that time, you would not see the little witch that has been the cause of so much confusion in my family.' He then went out of the room, leaving Trueman in a situation truly pitiable. He saw very plainly, that his master had by no means got rid of his passion for the amiable Peggy; he dreaded his villainy, yet knew not how to avoid its effects; he thought his seeing Peggy that day, might put him to the expence of an untruth, or expose him to Mr. Symonds's anger; and therefore determined not to go out of the house. This day he spent in revolving in his mind, in what manner to soften the harshness of a refusal; for he felt not the least wavering

ing in his disposition : he had always looked on marriages made merely on account of wealth, as very little better than lawful prostitution ; and so uncommon were his notions, that even an illicit commerce between one man and woman, when it was the effect of mutual love, had, in his opinion, more of the real essence of marriage than there could possibly be without an union of hearts, though the lawyer and priest joined their force to give sanction to the mercenary bargain. Towards night a note was delivered to him by a maid-servant ; it contained these words.

‘ Mr. Trueman,

‘ **A** REAL affection seeks not its own gratification, without the happiness of its object.
 ‘ My father is exasperated to the highest degree at your refusal. I on your account dread the effects of his anger. Since an accident has deprived me of the power of assisting you, dissemble your dislike, and depend on me to deliver you from

‘ The unhappy

‘ CHARLOTTE SYMONDS.’

This billet gave him fresh subject of uneasiness, as dissimulation was his abhorrence, and yet his not complying with the request in the letter, would look like distrust of the generous sentiments it expressed, and might give a keen pain to a heart that had already felt too much : this consideration made him alter his purpose of desiring to be dismissed the next morning, and he resolved to depend entirely on the generosity of Miss Symonds : That young lady had given many proofs of a noble mind, but in none did she appear so amiable, as in her promising to disarm her father’s anger. Instead of the boisterous fury of a slighted woman, whose passions too frequently betray their source, she, though she had lost all hopes of preserving him for herself, and had the strongest reason to believe a rival would share his happiness, made use of every effort to prove herself a sincere and disinterested friend. Here were no wishes for poison, racks, or daggers, to
 revenge

revenge her on the ungrateful villain, who had dared to be blind to her charms : his ease and content would have been her most ardent desire, had their love been mutual ; and she could not now found her bliss, like many ladies, in his ruin ; a disposition of mind, that does great dishonour to the fair, yet is so common, that it is no unusual thing, for a woman to become the most bitter enemy a man has, for no other reason, than because she once wished to be his most dear and intimate friend.

C H A P. II.

An unexpected meeting, in which Trueman is again Miss Williams's protector ; but pays dear for granting her his assistance.

MR. Symonds came home late in the evening, and seemed much fluttered and confused ; he went out early the next day, equipped for a journey, without either taking a servant with him, or acquainting his daughter whither he was bound. This behaviour, in a man remarkable for regularity, gave Trueman the utmost uneasiness, nor was Miss Charlotte much behind him in care. The first thought naturally fell on Peggy, and his master was hardly gone before he went to Mr. le Brun's, where, to his inconceivable anguish, he learnt that Miss Williams also had that morning set out, in consequence of a letter she had received, by which she was informed, that her father was taken sick on the road to London, whither he was coming to take the benefit of an act of insolvency.

The uneasiness that appeared in his countenance, on his receiving this news was so great, that Mrs. Goodwin took notice of it, and comforted him with the hopes of her speedy return ; but at the same time observed, that as his engagements with Miss Symonds would not permit him to feel more than compassion for Peggy, she wondered he should be so much concerned. The youth replied eagerly, ' Miss Symonds, madam, has every perfection that can make a man

‘happy, whose heart is not actuated by an affection for another; but the lovely Peggy is to me dearer than life, and her honour, her reputation, and as far as I know, her very life is in danger. Oh tell me the road, that I may fly to save her from impending ruin.’ This rant was perfectly unintelligible to the lady it was addressed to; and he would by no means discover the reason of his fears. Mrs. Goodwin could not inform him which way Peggy was gone, as she paid a strict regard to the command of her father, who had desired silence in that particular; but she promised to let him know on the receipt of her first letter.

Seeing no remedy, he returned home with a heavy heart. Miss Charlotte not doubting on what account he had been absent, asked him, if he had seen Miss Williams? when he told her what he had heard, and added, ‘Assist me, dear Miss, to frustrate the base designs of your father, since I make no doubt but you are acquainted with the road he has taken. All the gratitude that an indigent wretch like me can pay, is yours already; but the cause of distressed innocence is the cause of heaven, and heaven will repay with peace and joy that charity that is shewn to the miserable.’

This pathetic speech, though in favour of a rival, threw the lady into tears; she lamented her utter inability to give him the instructions necessary to his finding her father, and at the same time mentioned to him the accident she hinted at, in her note to him the day before, which was no other than that her dressing-box had been robbed, not only of all her ready money, but of several ornaments of value. All Trueman’s hopes now depended on the letter Mrs. Goodwin expected to receive: he past three days in the most terrible anxiety; and on the fourth, he received a letter which required his coming immediately into Buckinghamshire, as his father was at the point of death. His uncertainty as to the fate of his dear Peggy, lay too near his heart for him to feel the grief he might have otherwise felt at this news: he almost resolved not to go, though all his hopes of future fortune depended on

on his presence; for the writer, who was an old man, and had been servant to his mother's father, gave him to understand, that his mother-in-law and booby brother, were hatching some contrivance that would, if not timely prevented, rob him of his inheritance. The contents of this letter he communicated to Miss Symonds, who advised him by all means to comply with the advice of his friend, promising that she would let him know whatever she could learn of Peggy, and to that end would make an acquaintance with Mrs. Goodwin.

He got, without any thing remarkable happening to him, to his father's; but found a very unwelcome reception. The old man, contrary to all expectation, was in a fair way to do well, as a quinsy in his throat had burst the night before his son's arrival. The trouble of the young man's heart, which was encreased by the slights he received immediately on his arrival, gave a gloom to his features, which his kind mother-in-law persuaded her believing husband, was the effect of his disappointment at finding him alive; and in short, every mark of disrespect was shewn, in order to drive him out of the house, in which he stayed but one night, heartily repenting that he had undertaken the journey. In his way back, he crossed the road up a by-lane to call at the village in which he had passed his infant years, where he had the misfortune to be attacked by a single highwayman, who robbed him of the trifle he had to bear his charges home. But notwithstanding the distress to which he was now reduced, the unkind treatment he had met with at his father's, deterred him from returning thither for a supply; and he chose rather to depend on the charity of strangers than to subject himself to the taunts of his father's wife.

He travelled on under the greatest anxiety of mind, fretting at his fruitless expedition, till the cries of a woman at some distance, made him, from a sense of humanity, forget himself, and gallop hastily to the assistance of the distressed: He was directed by the sound, till he came to a covert of trees. As the
 E. 4. noise

noise had stopped, he hesitated a moment; but on hearing a rustling among the leaves, he tied his horse to a tree, and entered the thicket; where he had not gone many steps before he beheld his Peggy stretched on the ground, without the least appearance of life, and Mr. Symonds and her mother consulting about removing her. What a sight for her lover! her cries, and the confusion that appeared on the countenance of her companions, gave him the most terrible apprehensions: his poverty, and the different situations of master and servant were in that tumultuous instant forgot, and he addressed to Mr. Symonds the terms villain, hypocrite, and ravisher, and every opprobrious epithet, that the most violent rage could dictate, protesting, that if he offered to touch the dear creature again, he would himself put an end to his villainy and life. This menace was not without effect, for his master, perhaps alarmed at his resolution, condescended to endeavour to soften his rage, and bring him to temper, by insisting that no personal injury had been done to Peggy. This assertion was of very little weight with Trueman, as such strong appearances seemed to prove it false; but the first words of Peggy, who had recovered during the altercations that passed between him and his master, removed the greatest part of his fears. She, in the most plaintive voice, begged to be told what they had done with her father, and why she was kept from him? ‘Sure,’ said she, rising with precipitation, ‘the whole world can’t have conspired my ruin. In a christian country, some one will give me succour, and save my innocence from the attempts of a cruel unrelenting villain, and an unnatural mother. The law will not suffer you to detain my father long in a gaol, and over me you have no power.’ Then bursting into tears, she said, ‘but death will I hope, release from your cruelty, a poor miserable old man, since your artifices have made me unable to give him assistance’

Mr. Symonds, with the utmost spite replied, ‘You forget you have got your old champion. To be sure
‘ he

‘ he won’t let you want, now he has obeyed your
 ‘ summons, and come after you : but I shall take care
 ‘ to force him to be just, before he is charitable.’ She
 had not time to ask for an explanation ; for the youth
 instantly replied with much indignation, ‘ The man
 ‘ that has it in his power, and does not succour, but
 ‘ distress the miserable, I am sure does not deserve, the
 ‘ title of just. I know the advantage you have over
 ‘ me, from the trifle I owe you ; but you may assure
 ‘ yourself, I will forfeit liberty or life itself, to pre-
 ‘ serve this dear creature from your designs.’

He then ran to Peggy, bid her be comforted ; for
 within two miles of the place where they were, he
 knew a charitable widow, whom he would prevail on
 to give her maintenance, till she could write to town.
 She looked on him with eyes of astonishment ; but was
 some time before she could make him the least answer ;
 at length she said, with a deep sigh, ‘ Sure heaven
 ‘ marked you out for my protector and friend ; but I
 ‘ must remember also, that you are, or soon will be
 ‘ the son of that old villain, and must not for the sake
 ‘ of what I may suffer, ruin my benefactor. I cannot
 ‘ now be happy ; and therefore don’t wish to prolong
 ‘ a wretched life. Could I but give an aged father re-
 ‘ lief, who is shut up by this bad man in a loathsome
 ‘ prison, it would be the utmost felicity I could expect
 ‘ in this world ; but, alas ! my barbarous mother has,
 ‘ on one pretence or other, stripped me to my last
 ‘ shilling.’

‘ Oh!’ answered Mr. Symonds, ‘ you need not
 ‘ doubt, but that youth will supply you ; he could not
 ‘ think of turning knight-errant without a sufficient
 ‘ quantity of cash for the undertaking, and he has got
 ‘ a fond father in this part of the country, who will
 ‘ provide most bountifully for you both, if you tell him
 ‘ a fine tale of your escaping the claws of a monstrous
 ‘ giant, called Frank Symonds ; but beware, lest your
 ‘ tongue furnish your spark there with a stone doublet.’
 When he had finished this sarcastical threat, he turn-
 ed after the woman, and left them alone.

It was with some difficulty that the forlorn Peggy
 could be persuaded, that Trueman was not under en-

gagements to Miss Symonds; for the old wretch, that lady's father, had told her of his being resolved to bestow his daughter on him; but had, to serve his own purposes, concealed his refusal; luckily to satisfy all her doubts, Trueman had in his pocket the note he had received a few days before from the generous Miss Charlotte. This, abandoned as she was to despair, gave a flush of joy that she could not conceal, and she praised the noble sentiments of the young lady, with a warmth that shewed the delighted Trueman, she was far from being disinterested: her father was for a moment forgot, while she indulged the enchanting hope, that she might still be happy; but as soon as Symonds's threats, recurred to her memory, she felt that besides her fear for a parent she had still a nearer care, and apprehensions of a more tender nature. This she modestly concealed, laying the tears she could not suppress to her father's account, though perhaps this dutiful child, who loved her parent as well as wife fathers should wish to be loved, now found the bitterest part of her anguish proceeded from her dread, that a lover should be condemned, on her account, to waste his youth and bloom in confinement. The intolerable pangs she felt at this thought, could be heightened by nothing but the scene that immediately followed.

Trueman, on his entering the thicket, had tied his horse to a tree; but on his return to the place, where he had left him, he found him gone. This, as he belonged to Mr. Symonds, gave him great uneasiness, for the value of the creature would enhance his debt; but in a few minutes, he had another reason to regret his loss; for he beheld several men, whom he imagined to be in pursuit of him. If he had had no other care but for his own safety, he would probably have escaped the vigilance of his pursuers, as he was on the confines of another county; but the weakness of his dear Peggy, retarded his flight, and he was seized by a couple of fellows, who by virtue of a writ, carried him to the county-jail, destitute of all manner of necessaries. The weeping Peggy followed him; but was not admitted within the gate.

C H A P. III.

A proof that misery does not always humanize the mind. Peggy succoured by a charitable stranger, who also releases Trueman.

THIS terrible moment Mr. Symonds made use of, to make his grand attack on the virtue and resolution of the unhappy Miss Williams, offering her an handsome settlement for life; with the release of her lover and father; but when he found every attempt was in vain, he uttered execrations against the unhappy youth, that made her tremble, and then left her.

In this hopeless condition, she recollected the asylum Trueman had promised her in the house of the good widow, and once more desired admittance to speak with him; but before this was granted, she was forced to endure many coarse jests from the officers, on her being found in so lonely a place, with a brisk young fellow; and her blushes increased their rudeness: however, when they had for some time practised the savage pleasure of giving confusion and pain to an amiable girl, whose distress was visible in her whole behaviour, they admitted her into the horrid mansion.

I shall attempt no description of the sights of woe that pained her heart and eyes in her way to him she wanted, these were erased from her memory the moment she beheld him. A cruel wretch was contending with him for garnish, and, as he said he had no money, insisted on his parting with some of his wearing apparel. She did not attend to his answer; for the sight of her father's furtout, which hung on the fellow's arm, roused all her tenderness for an unhappy old man, exposed to the miseries of cold and hunger. She now with a dutiful eagerness demanded the coat, when the man answered that it was not the lad's; but a poor wretch's, that he dare answer for it, would not live to want it long.

This

This reply increased her anguish, and she hastily pulling her buckles from her shoes, offered them in exchange. They were readily accepted; but when the man was putting them in his pocket, a woman neatly dressed, asked the price of them, and having given what was demanded, presented them again to their former owner. This action, which was accompanied with a tear of pity, drew the observation of Trueman on the generous female, when he instantly remembered the face of the good woman's niece to whose care his uncle would have recommended his daughter in the moment of her distress, had not the consequences of her disobedience and flight deprived him of his life; but the young woman, without seeming to mind Trueman, hurried out of the room, as soon as she had returned the buckles to Peggy, who also went to pay her duty to her father, and to return him his coat, even before she had spoke to her lover; but what was the gratitude of this amiable girl, when she found in her hand three guineas, a sum that enabled her to supply the present wants both of a lover and father.

Trueman enquired of the man, who still insisted on his demand, if he knew the young lady? He was answered that she came to the prison once a week, and sought out proper objects of charity; that she had relieved several who were arrested for small sums, and had brought the creditors of others to accept of part of their debts, which she had generously discharged; that she industriously concealed her name and quality, and lived with a poor woman in a neighbouring village, under the title of her niece; though most people said, she was the cast off mistress of Squire Richards; 'but be her who she will,' added the man, 'she keeps many a poor wretch from starving within these walls; and if charity covers a multitude of sins, she will certainly go to heaven when she dies; so let us leave her, and remember ourselves: do, dear master, give me money or money's worth, that your fellow prisoners may drink your health, for you can possibly be no loser, since the next new comer must do the same

‘ same by you ; and God be thanked there is no fear
‘ of want of company in such times as these.’

Trueman asked the fellow, if he was not ashamed to thank God for the miseries of his fellow-creatures ? ‘ Why, aye, that’s true,’ he returned, without the least concern ; ‘ but all the comfort I’ve had this two ‘ years, has been from fresh men, so you can’t blame ‘ me, for being glad of their misfortunes ; if you ‘ will but let me drink at your cost, you will find me ‘ the best natured fellow in England ; but by your ‘ leave, since you won’t part with your cash, I’ll make ‘ bold with this hat, it will fetch us a couple of gal- ‘ lons of good ale, and you can’t possibly want it, ‘ while you are obliged to keep house.’ So saying, he ran off with it, leaving the young man in the utmost astonishment at his impudence.

The appearance of Peggy made him forget this trifling incident ; she had been weeping over her father, who, she feared, would not long survive the fright he had undergone on her account, and she now beheld one, whom she loved still more tenderly, in almost as forlorn a situation : who can describe the pangs that wrung her heart when she heard him say, that he had scarce any hopes of assistance from his father, and would rather die in the place where he was than ask it, if it was not for the hopes, that his being at liberty, would succour her and her father in their present distress ? She now told him of the relief she had just received, and begged him to share it with her : but as his own hopes were very slender, he in the tenderest manner declined accepting her proposal ; however, he that night wrote a letter to his father ; but received no other consolation, than what is contained in the following answer.

‘ JOSHUA, I have heard that you are
‘ I Always thought what your troubling yourself in
‘ other folks affairs would come to. If your bro-
‘ ther Bob had been like you, he would not be the
‘ man he is. I durst not tell your father where you
‘ are, for fear it might make him ill again. I won-
‘ der

‘ der you should expect any thing from us, when you
 ‘ know how well you might have done if you had
 ‘ been wise. As you have made your bed, so you
 ‘ must lie in it. I shall never persuade my good man,
 ‘ to bestow the fruit of his labour on you, to maintain
 ‘ your wenches. Send no more letters here, we want
 ‘ no news from jail-birds. Little did I think of being
 ‘ related to one: I who have slaved early and late to
 ‘ pay every one their own; but I make it my comfort,
 ‘ my own child proves no such bitter curse; though he
 ‘ has had no parson to bring him up, nor boasts of
 ‘ book-learning. It would have been well for you, if
 ‘ like him, you had minded the main chance; but as it
 ‘ is, I give you no hopes of favour from us; for however
 ‘ well we may wish you, we are both resolved not to
 ‘ plunge ourselves into difficulties to relieve one, who
 ‘ has from his infancy been the greatest plague of our
 ‘ lives; besides, your father has lately made a new pur-
 ‘ chase, and really has no money by him, so you must
 ‘ get out of the scrape as well as you can. Your brother
 ‘ gives his love, and has sent you two crown pieces.
 ‘ He would have come to see you; but I forbid him;
 ‘ for I know by your unhappy example, the mischief
 ‘ of bad company. Your old companion Joe Williams
 ‘ ought to help you, for he has it in his power, as the
 ‘ wench he got with child is now his wife, and has
 ‘ been lately left a great fortune. If those you have
 ‘ loved and served, won’t assist you, don’t expect it
 ‘ from me, who have always been

‘ Your despised mother;

‘ HANNAH TRUEMAN.”

No words can paint the indignation of poor True-
 man at the receipt of this epistle. Though he was
 now faint through hunger, he took the money that
 came wrapped in the letter and squired it from him with
 the utmost disdain: and was ready to burst with anger,
 till a shower of friendly tears, in spight of his man-
 hood, came to his relief. In this condition he was
 caught by the lovely Peggy, who, notwithstanding his
 endeavours to conceal his uneasiness, observed the
 traces

traces of it on his countenance. Her business now was to invite him to some refreshment she had provided for her father; but the bitter pill he had just been forced to swallow, took from him all desire of eating: however, he followed her, and was introduced into a tolerable apartment, where an old man, who had much the appearance of gentleman, saluted him by the title of friend, and the preserver of his dear daughter. These flattering epithets, and the company of his mistress, who had now entirely thrown off that reserve and restraint that had been the effect of jealous fear, by degrees dissipated his chagrin, and he grew conversible. He now found that the circumstances of Mr. Williams, Peggy's father, was not so terrible as he at first apprehended, since a few weeks would terminate his confinement, when he would be released by law; and that the keeper was prevailed on to let him have more liberty than others, by the forcible rhetoric of a guinea, which had been given him by the humane lady, who was the weekly visitor of this house of misery, and who had made a particular enquiry concerning the nature of his debt; but this was not all the good news Trueman met with to alleviate his grief, for before he retired to rest, he received the following billet.

‘ Dear Master JOSHUA,

‘ **M**Y heart bleeds for you: I knew both your mother and uncle, good souls! many a kindness I have had from them, which I never can repay. I have saved nine guineas; all which is at your service: but durst not come with it myself, as Mistress has sworn to turn out every servant who shall dare to see you, and I believe deals with the devil; for none of us can be too cunning for her; but for all that I will some way or other get it to you; for I can have no rest while my dear mistress's dear child sleeps in a prison, and he is miserable who has so often been fondled in the arms of

‘ SARAH MIDDLETON.’

The

The affectionate honesty that appeared in this note, raised his admiration, especially when he recollected that the writer was only a poor woman who weeded his father's garden, who perhaps, had laid up this sum, trifling as it was, for the support of her old age. This thought made him resolve not to accept it, lest it might expose the benevolent creature to as great distresses as his own. The contrast between his father's wife and this old woman, raised his indignation for the one, in proportion to the gratitude he felt for the other. He told Mr. Williams of this prospect of relief, and the old gentleman greatly approved the delicacy of his reasonings against accepting the offer; he therefore went to bed, firmly resolved to return the money, if it came.

C H A P. IV.

A piece of courtship very different from that used by the generality of lovers. Gold and jewels in a mean cottage, raise the curiosity of our young couple; on the rank of the inhabitants.

EARLY next morning Mr. Trueman was saluted with the agreeable news of liberty; but as he imagined this was purchased at the expence of the poor old woman's hoard, he insisted on the money's being returned, when the keeper, who began to think his prisoner out of his senses, asked to whom he should return it; and was answered to the messenger that brought it. He was then informed that he did not owe this bounty to the affection of old Sarah; but to the amiable lady who had so kindly relieved his Peggy the day before: she had sent also a letter to the poor girl, in which she offered to support her during the time of her father's confinement, which she was told would not last more than five or six weeks. All these favourable circumstances restored tranquillity of heart to Trueman, and he resolved that very day to go with his dear mistress to return thanks to his generous benefactress. In this little excursion, which was in reality only a small walk, he felt delight

to which he had hitherto been a stranger ; his Peggy a good deal relieved from her solicitude for a father and lover, gave a modest loo'e to the transports of her heart. She confessed her obligations to the youth in terms that spoke more than gratitude. She even owned the sensibility of her soul ; but at the same time lamented the utter impossibility of their union being attended with the least prospect of happiness, since it was her resolution to try every method she could think of, to maintain her father. Trueman agreed that this was certainly her duty, and added with a look of affection ; ' But why, my dear, should this hinder our happiness ? ' is your father an enemy to my wishes ? or does my charmer think, this would be less my task than hers ? ' Believe me, my dear, my fond heart would exult in removing care from this lovely bosom. I should rejoice in the power of shielding you, and your father, from the hardships of poverty ; but let us not by a criminal distrust of providence, throw the blessings from us that are in our reach. I have been witness to many scenes of domestick bliss, in the narrowest circumstances. My dear uncle lived in the village we are just entering, in a state that most folks call penury, yet I have seen and shared his happiness, when at the head of an homely board, he has expressed the highest gratitude to heaven for his many comforts. O my Peggy ! the delightful, the enchanting hope of meeting your smiles, as the reward of the day's industry, would soften the hardest labour. I should, though in the meanest cot, triumph in the treasure I possessed, and, if favoured with health, look on myself as one of the happiest of mortals. She was going to make a reply to this affecting description of humble life, which if one might guess by the softness that appeared in her eyes, would have favoured the hopes of her lover ; but their arrival at the cottage to which they were going, prevented her.

Here they found no one at home, but a pretty girl about seven years old, who told them she expected both her aunts in a minute. The child appeared very plain ;
but

but far from the meanness which the out-side of the house seemed to promise ; the few minutes they waited, they were entertained by the innocent prattle of the child, who seemed at this early age to have imbibed principles that did honour to her instructors. On sight of her aunts, whom she saw at some distance, she ran to inform them, that they were waited for: Mean while Trueman, who saw the pleasure his Peggy took to hear the little chatterer, asked her, if she did not imagine the lady who had chose that cottage for her residence, had a very odd fancy, ' since,' said he, ' it is plain by the largeness of her bounty, she is in affluent circumstances, and by the education she has already given the child, I am sure she has been in a different situation.' Peggy made no other answer, than desiring him to observe a small light closet, the door of which the little girl had left open. Here stood a neat dressing-table, on which lay a chased watch adorned with several trinkets of value ; among the rest, a picture set round with diamonds, the features of which, they were not near enough to examine, and good manners obliged them to suppress their curiosity ; however, so genteel an ornament in such a place, appeared to them to speak some mystery. The coming of the two women put a stop, for the present, to their conjectures ; they were both in a habit suited to the meanness of the house, and it was with some confusion, that the youngest found she was known to Trueman. The old woman welcomed him to her cot as an old acquaintance, and set before them refreshment, with a cheerfulness that gave bread and butter, and some home-made wine, a better relish than the delicacies of a guinea ordinary could have had, where friendship and good nature were wanting.

As Trueman had observed a blush on the cheek of the young woman on his speaking to her when she came in, he deferred returning his thanks, till the old dame had turned her back ; but he soon found by the unreserved behaviour of them both, that there was no occasion for this caution, for though the young lady called the old woman aunt, it was very visible to a discerning

discerning eye, that she had no manner of dependance on her. The tears of the child, whom the young woman chid severely for some misdemeanor during her absence, gave the tender heart of Peggy a good deal of concern; but they were soon dried up by the returning favour of her aunt, and the cause of them forgot. Trueman now expressed his sense of her humanity in terms that spoke a grateful heart; but was soon bid to make no more acknowledgments, in a manner that let him see they were really painful to the lady, since she received them with an apparent uneasiness. After several questions relating to Peggy's father, she was by the friendly old woman, invited to stay with them till his release. This was chearfully accepted on the part of Peggy; but when Trueman begged permission to visit her there, this was denied him, though with the utmost affability.

This refusal gave him a good deal of pain; but as his mistress proposed to spend some part of every day with her father, he hoped to find many opportunities of indulging the softness of his heart in her company. To that end, he engaged himself as a servant to a neighbouring farmer, and every hour of leisure he gave either to Peggy or Mr. Williams, when by his innocent inoffensive behaviour, he so gained on the affections of the old gentleman, that he loved him nearly as well as his own child. Mean while Peggy, whose temper grew more sprightly in proportion as her fears for those who were dear to her, decreased, became the confident and companion of the charitable lady who had relieved her in her distress. She soon learnt that the sweet girl whose prattling innocence gave her each day new pleasure, stood in a much nearer relation to her benefactress than she appeared, since the poor lady, on the child's having a dangerous fall, had shewed all the emotions of a mother, and, lost in her affection, had called her, her dear infant, her darling daughter; words past recall: she therefore wisely chose to trust the whole secret of her birth to the discretion of her guest, rather than tempt her to betray what she had heard, out of pique at her not being admitted to share her confidence.

This

This happened in the absence of the good old woman; when the young lady, pleased at the assiduity and care of Peggy, who sprained her arm in catching the child, and breaking its fall, expressed her acknowledgments, and as soon as her apprehensions for her little Jenny were removed, gave her, with many tears, a relation of the baseness and perfidy of an ungrateful villain, and such an account of her own misfortunes, as raised in the mind of her affectionate guest the tenderest pity for the unhappy sufferer, and detestation for the monster that caused her sufferings.

C H A P. V.

The history of Miss JENNY.

‘ I MAKE no doubt,’ she began, ‘ but from the
 ‘ little ornaments you saw on my toilet the day I
 ‘ found you, and young Trueman here, that you believe
 ‘ me not to be what I seem to outward appearance. It
 ‘ was the vexation I received from this discovery that
 ‘ made me rate in such a manner my poor Jenny, who
 ‘ in the heedlessness of play had left the door open,
 ‘ and I know that I have now by my own inadvertency,
 ‘ more than confirmed those suspicions, but I will not
 ‘ doubt your integrity, nor perplex myself with sub-
 ‘ terfuges to conceal the truth. The dear creature is
 ‘ indeed my child, at once the shame and comfort of
 ‘ my life; but if from hence you judge me abandoned
 ‘ to vice, you cruelly wrong me. Was I less sensible
 ‘ of the value of that honour I have lost, I should per-
 ‘ haps be more happy, and should not as now, wear
 ‘ the appearance of the humble cottager, but glitter in
 ‘ the spoils of guilt, since the man to whom my child
 ‘ owes its birth, is not only able, but willing to sup-
 ‘ port me in splendor. My father was born to a gen-
 ‘ teel estate; but an unhappy propensity to gaming re-
 ‘ duced his family, which only consisted of me and
 ‘ my mother, almost to want. He did not long sur-
 ‘ vive the miseries of indigence; for as he dearly loved
 ‘ his wife and child, his own reflections on our un-
 ‘ happy

‘ happy situation, which he always attributed to his
 ‘ own folly, worked like a lingering poison on his con-
 ‘ stitution, and he died a young man, leaving me a
 ‘ helpless infant, to the care of my mother, with no
 ‘ other subsistence than about thirty pounds a year;
 ‘ which small pittance was the remainder of a large join-
 ‘ ture, which his fondness had caused him to settle on
 ‘ his wife, though she brought him no fortune. This
 ‘ trifle was paid by the father of a gentleman, who now
 ‘ possesses a large estate in this county, and to whom I
 ‘ owe all my misfortunes.

‘ As our support was so exceeding small, my mother
 ‘ was sometimes forced to solicit prompt payment of
 ‘ the old Squire. This, as he was a man of sensibility,
 ‘ and enjoyed a pretty estate, through my father’s folly,
 ‘ whose necessities had made him part with it to a great
 ‘ disadvantage, inspired him with the thought of pro-
 ‘ viding for me. He communicated his design to my
 ‘ mother, who, for the sake of my advantage very
 ‘ readily deprived herself of the pleasure of parental
 ‘ dalliance, and gave me to the care of the good
 ‘ old gentleman, when I was little more than seven
 ‘ years old.

‘ My young heart at first looked on my being se-
 ‘ parated from my mother as a terrible misfortune;
 ‘ but the exchange I soon perceived in my dress and
 ‘ attendance, presently reconciled me to this loss. My
 ‘ patron, at the time of my being taken into his fa-
 ‘ mily, had two daughters nearly of my own age, and
 ‘ by his express command, there was not the least dif-
 ‘ ference made betwixt us, as to dress or education;
 ‘ but before I was fourteen years old, I lost my dear
 ‘ companions, who both died of the small pox in one
 ‘ week. Young as I was, I felt this stroke very keen-
 ‘ ly, and was by my grief reduced to a mere skeleton.
 ‘ Their father, out of compassion to me, often smo-
 ‘ thered his own sighs, and strove with the tenderness
 ‘ of a real parent to dry up my tears; but alas! my
 ‘ consolation was to come from more dangerous hands;
 ‘ the son of my benefactor, who was five years older
 ‘ than myself, was sent for from the university to con-
 ‘ sole

‘ sole his afflicted father for this double loss. I had
‘ not seen him for three years. I loved; at least I
‘ thought I loved him, with the affection and purity
‘ of a sister; but an unusual perturbation of mind now
‘ seized me whenever I beheld him: if he but spoke
‘ to me, though on the commonest subject, I blushed
‘ and knew not why. In short, though I recovered
‘ my health, my mind went through agitations that I
‘ could with great difficulty conceal.

‘ Mean while, I had the mortification of observ-
‘ ing, that the heart I wished to charm, remained un-
‘ touched; rural sports took up a great part of his
‘ time, and I often looked on the bottle as a dan-
‘ gerous rival. Two years past without his giving me
‘ the least hope; but on my being addressed to by a
‘ gentleman in the neighbourhood, his passion burst
‘ out like a smothered flame; his diversions were for-
‘ got; his companions in vain called him to pledge
‘ their toasts; jealousy and love had converted him
‘ into a perfect moap. I saw and rejoiced in the
‘ change. I imagined he had made a confident of his
‘ father; for on receiving a third visit from my ad-
‘ mirer, who was really a man of worth, my patron
‘ as soon as he was gone, came to my apartment, and
‘ with a look of great earnestness, enquired very mi-
‘ nutely into the situation of my heart. I concealed
‘ the flutter I was in, under an air of gaiety, and told
‘ him I had too much regard to his approbation, to
‘ dispose of my hand, without it. “Your hand; my
“ dear girl,” he replied briskly, “may be so com-
“ plaisant as to wait my motions; but what have you
“ done with your heart? Don’t your heart run coun-
“ ter to my wishes?” I answered him, perfectly sure
‘ that it was affection to his son, that made him so
‘ warm, that I needed only his commands, and he
‘ should see with what readiness I would obey them.
“It is then, he returned, to discard your present
“ lover; those charms are destined for a man of thrice
“ his estate, whose long acquaintance with your me-
“ rit, has taught him how it ought to be prized. A
“ few weeks, my dear Jenny,” he added, “will dis-
“ cover

“ cover this lover, to whom I know there is but one
 “ objection, which I depend on your good sense to
 “ get over.” ‘ I was almost tempted to tell him, my
 ‘ heart knew no objection, but bashfulness kept me
 ‘ silent.

‘ It was with some little uneasiness, that I the next
 ‘ day, received a present from the old gentleman, of
 ‘ all his late wife’s jewels. I fancied they would have
 ‘ received an additional value, if they had come from
 ‘ the hand of his son ; but what gave me the greatest
 ‘ perplexity, was the continued silence of the young
 ‘ gentleman, who grew more and more melancholy.
 ‘ After a fortnight’s suspense, I beheld, to my utter
 ‘ astonishment, preparations making for his beginning
 ‘ his travels ; and it was talked in the family, that
 ‘ he was to make the tour of Europe.

‘ This disappointment to my hopes I bore in silence,
 ‘ though my heart was torn with the most terrible an-
 ‘ guish. I imagined, I saw something of reserve on
 ‘ the countenance of the old gentleman towards his
 ‘ son, though to me he was all affability and good hu-
 ‘ mour. Fond of tormenting myself, I at some mo-
 ‘ ments attributed this reserve to the opposition he had
 ‘ met with from him in his design of advancing me to
 ‘ the honour of being his daughter-in-law ; but when-
 ‘ ever my eyes met those of the young gentleman, I
 ‘ was convinced that I wronged him, by an unjust sus-
 ‘ picion, since they always spoke the tender language
 ‘ of love. I observed too, that every opportunity was
 ‘ taken of separating us, during the time that he stay-
 ‘ ed in England. At length the dreadful moment of
 ‘ parting came, when I summoned up all my courage
 ‘ to bear it with tolerable decency. He seemed, at his
 ‘ taking leave of me, constrained in his expressions of
 ‘ tenderness, by the presence of his father, who never
 ‘ left us alone the whole morning ; but he was hardly
 ‘ drove from the gate, before my maid gave me a let-
 ‘ ter, that opened all the mystery of the late proceed-
 ‘ ing. In this letter he lamented, in the most pathetic
 ‘ terms, his absolute dependance on his father, confes-
 ‘ sed a passion that he said, made him unable to stay to
 be

‘ be witness of a solemnity that would for ever frustrate
‘ all his hopes of happiness, and he concluded with
‘ telling me, that whenever I became his mother. I
‘ should sign an everlasting warrant of banishment for
‘ him, since his love was too ardent to be confined
‘ within that respect that was due from him to his fa-
‘ ther’s wife.

‘ Not all the gratitude I owed to my patron, kept me
‘ from looking on him with horror. I had always
‘ felt the tender respect of a child to an indulgent pa-
‘ rent. I had always esteemed myself under far great-
‘ er obligations to love and reverence him, than if na-
‘ ture had given me a right to his protection and care ;
‘ but when the husband was to take place of the fa-
‘ ther, I shuddered with an unconquerable aversion.

‘ While I was in this embarrassment, I was entirely
‘ at a loss what part to act. I would have recalled my
‘ lover, by a promise of never marrying his father ;
‘ but I thought this step would expose us both to the
‘ old gentleman’s anger, who, as I knew him to be a
‘ man warm in his resentments, might very probably
‘ have cast me off, without resource to the unpitying
‘ world, and have disinterested his son. On the other
‘ hand, I could not bear the thought of his leaving the
‘ kingdom ignorant of the situation of my heart. I
‘ should never have come to a determination, had it
‘ not been for the assiduity of my maid, who cunningly
‘ wormed herself into my confidence ; by her I learnt,
‘ that my lover would wait some time at Harwich,
‘ where he was to be followed by a gentleman, his fa-
‘ ther had appointed for the companion of his travels.
‘ I wrote to him to assure him, that I was entirely ig-
‘ norant of the impression I had made on the old gentle-
‘ man’s heart, and that my own was absolutely averse
‘ to so preposterous an union. The consequence of
‘ this letter, was my seeing him in three days at my
‘ feet, where he protested the ardency of his passion
‘ had brought him. The imprudence of this step, flat-
‘ tering as it was to my tenderness, filled me with un-
‘ easiness and anxiety. I entreated him to return back,
‘ before his arrival should be known. This was a re-
‘ quest

quest he seemed obstinately bent on refusing me, making a merit of venturing his father's displeasure for my sake. I in vain expostulated with him, that we both ran the hazard of ruin: he attributed my just fears to a coldness in my affection, and peremptorily refused to go back, unless I would promise to hold a correspondence with him. This, as I hated connivance and deceit, I with great reluctance consented to, and he again left his father's house, without its being known that he had been at home since his first setting out. During the time he waited for his companion, I received several letters, full of the most pathetic expressions of tenderness and everlasting love: but while I exulted in the conquest of a mind, I had long wished to subdue, I was not without vexation. My patron threw off all reserve, and confessed the lover. I affected not to understand him, and treated all he said as raillery. This a little embarrassed him, and for a short time gave me a release from addresses that I thought a persecution: but he was not to be so repulsed; he resumed the hateful subject, with a seriousness that left me no room to make a jest of it: he even offered me a settlement that would have made me the envy of half the county: but what are jointures and settlements to a heart that loves? I still refused, and represented the injury such a proceeding would be to his son. He flew into a violent passion, and charged me with ingratitude: stung to the quick at this reproach, I burst into tears, and vowed to receive no more such painful obligations, if forcing the inclinations of my heart was to be the payment expected for them. He seemed very much moved with what I said, begged me to pardon his heat, and told me, since he was hateful to me, he would do violence to all his hopes, and try to conquer his love, though he added, with a sigh, that he believed his life would fall a sacrifice to the effort.

About this time my mother came to pay me a visit. I had not seen her for seven years, and felt great consolation in the thought of opening my heart to

‘ her, and letting her know all my griefs ; but, alas !
 ‘ the hopes of seeing me out of the danger of feeling
 ‘ the miseries she had experienced from the want of
 ‘ wealth, made her deaf to all I could say, on the dis-
 ‘ parity and unsuitableness of my old lover’s age to mine :
 ‘ she charged me, on the pain of her eternal curse, not
 ‘ to refuse the honour offered me, and so intimidated me
 ‘ by her threats, that I durst not trust her with the secret
 ‘ of my love. I even fancied that her coming was at
 ‘ the desire of my patron, and that she was bribed to
 ‘ plead his cause. But this suspicion wronged him :
 ‘ he possessed an honest open mind, and was above de-
 ‘ ceit. Happy had it been for me, if the inheritor of
 ‘ his estate had been the inheritor of his virtues.

‘ He faithfully kept his word with me, and never
 ‘ opened his lips on the subject of love ; but his de-
 ‘ clining health too plainly told me the force he did
 ‘ himself in this silence. I attended him with the ut-
 ‘ most care and diligence, and felt inexpressible an-
 ‘ guish when the physician pronounced him in dan-
 ‘ ger : all my obligations stared me in the face, and
 ‘ reproached me with the highest ingratitude : while
 ‘ my mother was continually ringing in my ears, the
 ‘ wretchedness of want and poverty, to which she said
 ‘ my obstinacy would infallibly expose me.

‘ In this distress, I was near making myself a sacri-
 ‘ fice from a motive of generosity, and had almost de-
 ‘ termined to preserve the life of my benefactor, my
 ‘ patron, and my friend, at the expence of my own
 ‘ peace ; nothing but a sense of its being an offence to
 ‘ heaven, to make vows of love and fidelity that the
 ‘ heart has no share in, kept me from this piece of
 ‘ heroism ; and I firmly resolved, if all my assiduity
 ‘ and care was blessed with the success I wished, and
 ‘ my patron was again restored to health, that I would
 ‘ suppress my inclination for his son, at least during
 ‘ his life-time.

‘ This resolution made me not so frequent in my
 ‘ letters to my lover, who was now at Paris, and I
 ‘ wrote too with rather more restraint than I had done,
 ‘ while my fondness made me forget the difficulties
 ‘ that

‘ that hindered our being united. He, in his answers, complained bitterly of my coldness, and hinted that he was no stranger to the cause. This I could not bear to be suspected, produced several epistles betwixt us, that but ill deserved the name of love-letters, and I at last sent him one, that forbid his writing to me again.

‘ The packet was hardly gone before I repented my heat, and felt sentiments that gave the lie to all I had wrote ; but pride kept me from sending another, till I had seen if my lover was cool enough to take me at my word.

‘ Several posts past, in which I received no letter ; and I began to think, I had for ever lost the only heart I had ever wished to charm. Tormented as I was with this suspicion, I felt not a little consolation in the prospect of the recovery of my dear benefactor. He seemed to have changed the warmth of a lover for the tender affection of a father, and ought to have had my confidence, in return for the kind assiduity which he shewed in his endeavours to remove my melancholy, tho’ he was unacquainted with the cause. He told me one day, when we were alone, that he feared it was my apprehensions of his renewing his addresses, that took away my natural sprightliness ; “ but, my dear Jenny,” he added, “ time, and your unconquerable aversion, has brought me to a just way of thinking. I am convinced, that at my time of life, a man makes but an indifferent figure when he commences a lover, especially in the eyes of a blooming girl. I will from henceforth resign all pretensions to that lovely person ; but because I have loved you more than I ought, let me not lose the esteem you always professed for me before this imprudent declaration. I think I can answer for myself, that I shall never try to force your inclinations, though I am not sure that I am cured enough of my love, to wish you another.” ‘ I interrupted him to tell him, if nothing but that fear disturbed his peace, he might be entirely easy ; for I hoped for no greater blessing in this world, than to attend him in my present station ;

“ and that I knew no man on earth, who would have
 “ power enough over me to make me think otherwise.”
 “ If my dear girl,” he prelied, “ is sincere in what she
 “ says, I shall be happier than my hopes, since, next to
 “ the dear delight of having you for ever mine, an as-
 “ surance that you are not prepossessed in favour of
 “ some more happy man, is the greatest pleasure I can
 “ now enjoy. A few years may probably put an end
 “ to my life, and your restraint : Then, dearest Jenny,
 “ ease my fond heart of its fears, and promise never
 “ to give away that hand without my consent.”

“ Unreasonable as this request was, I was by this
 “ time so assured of my lover’s coolness, that I promis-
 “ ed it without reserve, and bound myself in the so-
 “ lemnest manner to continue single, till I had his per-
 “ mission to marry. I did not look on this as a sacri-
 “ fice ; for I imagined it impossible that my lover could
 “ excuse himself from the charge of indifference, or
 “ that my present resentment should cease ; but the ve-
 “ ry next night made me repent my rashness.

“ When I was retired to my chamber, my maid,
 “ whom I had often forbid to mention my lover’s
 “ name, begged leave to tell me a piece of news, con-
 “ cerning an unhappy lover, who was arrived just
 “ time enough to know his misfortune. The air with
 “ which she spoke, made me see my folly in making
 “ this wench my confidant, since it was plain she was
 “ more in his interest than mine. I replied, with all
 “ the anger I could assume, that I was sleepy, and
 “ wanted to hear no idle tales. She made me no an-
 “ swer, but left the room. I was almost undressed, yet
 “ in spite of my pretended carelessness, I felt a curi-
 “ osity to know her meaning, which I could not sup-
 “ press. I therefore rang my bell ; when she returned,
 “ and gave me to understand that my lover was in the
 “ house. I started at the thought of the obligation I
 “ had just laid myself under, and resolved not to see
 “ him ; but the insinuations of my maid, and the weak-
 “ ness of my own heart, prevailed over this wise reso-
 “ lution. I was again dressed, he was admitted into
 “ my chamber, and this interview produced a recon-
 “ ciliation ;

' ciliation ; are conciliation fatal to all my future peace.
 ' In short, he continued in the house near a month,
 ' whilst his believing father thought him in Paris. My
 ' heart reproached me with this deceit, and I pressed
 ' him to be gone ; but he begged my permission to stay
 ' three days longer. The day before that in which he
 ' was to set out, he proposed our being privately mar-
 ' ried before he went. To this the engagement I had
 ' laid myself under to his father, was my only objec-
 ' tion. He lamented my rashness in terms that gave
 ' me an high idea of the excess of his tenderness, while
 ' his not being urgent with me to break my vow, ap-
 ' peared to me a strong proof of his own integrity.
 ' Fatal prepossession, that rendered me the dupe of
 ' the vilest artifice ! The day on which he had deter-
 ' mined to leave me, I, by his contrivance, met him at
 ' a neighbouring village, and spent great part of the
 ' morning in his company : he again pressed me to
 ' marry him, and I believe, softened as I now was, by
 ' the thoughts of parting, I should have consented, in
 ' spite of my former resolution to the contrary ; but
 ' my maid objected the impossibility of our procuring
 ' a priest that would keep our secret, since we could
 ' have none but the vicar, who owed his benefice to
 ' my lover's father. We now exchanged our vows of
 ' fidelity to each other, resolving to defer our marriage
 ' to more happy times ; and I returned home full of
 ' tears, believing that I should see him no more till he
 ' had finished his travels.

' I spent the evening in the only employment capa-
 ' ble of alleviating my sorrow ; namely, in talking
 ' with my maid of the perfections I fancied I beheld in
 ' my lover. In the middle of the night I waked, and
 ' found myself strenuously embraced in the arms of a
 ' man who stood by the bed-side. Terrified to the
 ' last degree, I was going to scream out, when the
 ' sight of my lover, who instantly removed from the
 ' bed, prevented me. As I was really angry at this
 ' impudent freedom, I resented it with a good deal of
 ' severity, and insisted on his leaving the room. He
 ' complained of my want of confidence in his honour,

‘ and said that he came back in order to be united to
‘ me by indissoluble bonds ; but that finding the door
‘ unlocked, he could not resist the pleasure of behold-
‘ ing me while I slept. In short, this night, this guilty
‘ night, I granted all he wished, after his telling me,
‘ that he had met with an old companion, a young
‘ clergyman, who was to marry us the next morning at
‘ an obscure village in our neighbourhood. Thither
‘ we went ; but after waiting some time, a letter in-
‘ formed us, that my lover’s friend had met with
‘ an accident that made him incapable of keeping his
‘ promise.

‘ The coolness with which he received this news,
‘ opened my eyes to the deceit that had been practised
‘ on me, and I accused him of a base contrivance to
‘ strip me of my honour. He said every thing he could
‘ think of, to calm my rage ; but in vain. I now saw
‘ I was betrayed, and felt unutterable anguish. In the
‘ height of my anger, my maid informed us, that no-
‘ thing but our being immediately parted could keep
‘ our secret from being betrayed ; for her old master
‘ had, by some means got intelligence where we were.
‘ My soul was torn with indignation to see, that the
‘ man, who but two days before, was so ready at form-
‘ ing excuses for his continuing with me, now shewed
‘ the utmost hurry to be gone. Lost as I was, I had
‘ too much pride, to attempt to alter his resolution,
‘ and suffered him to leave me to bear the brunt of his
‘ father’s anger.

‘ Words are too faint to describe the exquisite distress
‘ that wrung my heart, on my first entrance into the
‘ house of my friend and patron, that house that till
‘ now, I had never entered without sentiments of gra-
‘ titude and delight. Here I found another confirma-
‘ tion of my wretchedness, and of the designing
‘ wickedness of my barbarous betrayer ; for my maid
‘ was missing, and had left a note that she should no
‘ more return, being that day married to a valet be-
‘ longing to my perfidious lover. I was now absolute-
‘ ly at a loss what to think about my patron’s know-
‘ ledge of his son’s having been with me ; but the kind,
‘ the

‘ the affectionate behaviour of my dear benefactor,
 ‘ soon informed me, that the whole was a premeditated
 ‘ scene of villainy, and that he was entirely ignorant
 ‘ of my having been absent.

‘ The bitter remorse I felt for having forfeited my
 ‘ honour, and deceived the worthiest and best of men,
 ‘ was far from being the whole of my griefs ; for alas !
 ‘ a few weeks gave me the painful dread of being a
 ‘ mother, and bringing into the world an innocent,
 ‘ that must, by the force of barbarous custom partake
 ‘ of its parent’s shame, though a stranger to her guilt.
 ‘ The accumulated horrors of my mind now reduced
 ‘ me to such a situation, that there were little hopes of
 ‘ my life. During my illness, it was no hard matter to
 ‘ conceal the alteration of my shape ; but when, in
 ‘ spight of my griefs, through the care and tenderness
 ‘ of my patron, I recovered, I thought each eye that
 ‘ looked at me, discovered my shame. A condition
 ‘ beyond description deplorable, of which none can
 ‘ form an idea, that have not, like me, been betrayed
 ‘ by the weakness of their own heart, and the villainy
 ‘ of some base dissembler ; they must too have strong
 ‘ notions of the native excellence of purity and virtue,
 ‘ to reach the excess of my misery ; for I was at once
 ‘ loaded with self-reproach, that keenest torment of
 ‘ the human mind ; with fears for an unborn infant ;
 ‘ with a dread of shame and want, together with an
 ‘ expectation of the agonizing pangs of child-birth.

‘ Distressed on all sides, I was more than once tempt-
 ‘ ed to put an end to my life and misery together ; but
 ‘ the fear of an hereafter preserved me from the fatal
 ‘ attempt, till one morning overwhelmed with despair
 ‘ and grief, I went out, determined to fling myself into
 ‘ the mill-pond. This horrible fact, I really perpe-
 ‘ trated, but kind providence sent the worthy woman
 ‘ with whom I now live, to my rescue. She observed
 ‘ the ghastly look and distracted air which the irre-
 ‘ trievable crime I was about to commit had given
 ‘ me. I waited but till she was out of observation, and
 ‘ she was no sooner gone than I flung myself in, as I
 ‘ thought, out of the reach of succour.

‘ I remember nothing that passed after this, till I
‘ found myself on the side of the pond, in the arms of
‘ this my kind preserver, who was holding down my
‘ head, that I might discharge the water I had swal-
‘ lowed. No one had seen me but her self, and a ser-
‘ vant belonging to the mill, whom her cries had cal-
‘ led to my assistance. I was entirely unknown to them
‘ both, and she had the precaution to send the man to
‘ her cottage for a cordial, as soon as she found I was
‘ returning to myself.

‘ While he was gone, she begged me to tell, what
‘ dismal disaster could be the cause of my thus rushing
‘ on eternal horrors. This short question made me at
‘ once see the mercy of my deliverance, and for some
‘ moments rendered me unable to make her any reply.
‘ The strong, the pleasing sensation of gratitude to
‘ heaven, stilled all my grief, and gave a beam of joy
‘ to my soul, that a wretch like me ill deserved to feel.
‘ In this tranquil minute my friend, my patron appear-
‘ ed in sight, and renewed all my pangs, all my ter-
‘ rors; but when I heard the benevolent old woman
‘ relate to him the accident, as she called it, I sunk
‘ with shame and grief at his feet. Gladly would I
‘ have been covered by some mountain for ever from
‘ his eyes; but he knew and endeavoured to raise me.
‘ I clung to his knees, while I saw the tear of pity for
‘ my poignant distress, roll down his cheeks.

‘ The man who was sent for the restorative was come
‘ back before the strong passions that agitated my soul
‘ could get sufficient vent to let me utter a single word.
‘ My dear patron, from a regard to my fame, bought
‘ his silence, though, I am sure, as I was loose and
‘ undressed, he guessed the shameful part of my un-
‘ happiness. They led me to this house, where, after
‘ a violent flood of tears, I recited all the circum-
‘ stances of my folly, and his son’s baseness. I saw
‘ anger glow in his eyes at the villainy of the contri-
‘ vance on the part of my lover, and it was with great
‘ difficulty I prevented him from vowing to cast him
‘ off. The dismal, the fatal effect of my own de-
‘ spair, disarmed all his resentment against me for
‘ my

‘ my weakness, and he, with the tenderness of a father, gave me consolation, instead of the reproaches I dreaded.

‘ In order to conceal my misfortune, it was resolved, that I should pretend an invitation to a distant county, but should privately repair to this friendly cottage, till nature had delivered me from the burden I carried. This scheme happily took effect; and I was brought to bed of my little Jenny, without the least discovery, the midwife believing me some unhappy young creature sent from London to the care of the old woman, who called herself my aunt.

‘ When I was up again I returned to the seat of my patron, who still treated me with the most benevolent affection, never once mentioning my past misfortune. He sent for his son from his travels, while he kept from me the shocking mortification I must have received, had I known he wished to stay longer; however, as his dependance on his father kept him from disputing his peremptory commands, he returned home.

‘ He would now have renewed his guilty commerce with me; but I boldly repelled the temptation, and even as much as possible, avoided being in his company: he had not been at home long, before I found that my deceitful maid had been his mistress during his travels, and that her marriage with his valet was only a pretence to conceal the true motive of her going in his retinue. This proof of abandoned principles, prepared me to bear with patience his refusing to make me his wife, which his father earnestly pressed him to do, without so much as telling him, that he was acquainted with the reason that ought to have induced him to it, lest tyrannic custom might have prevailed over justice and humanity; and he should alledge that as an excuse for his not marrying me, that would make him a villain, if he gave his hand to any other woman.

‘ My benefactor and dearest friend lived but two years after the birth of my little girl; but before he died, he took care of me and my helpless infant, by

‘ placing out seven thousand pounds in the stocks, in
‘ my name and for my use. He advised me on his
‘ death bed to continue single, at least till my lover was
‘ married, and even inspired me with the hope of one
‘ day retrieving his heart, by observing, that as inat-
‘ tention and levity were the causes of his slighting me,
‘ rather than any settled dislike to my person, which he
‘ always spoke of with the highest esteem, it was
‘ far from impossible, but that he might one time or
‘ other, be brought to a just way of thinking, and of
‘ his own accord render himself happy by making me
‘ so.

‘ It is this distant hope that has kept me near him, though
‘ I durst not trust myself in his company. I frequently
‘ receive letters from him that express the warmest af-
‘ fection ; but I almost as frequently hear of some new
‘ enormity, and I have brought myself to a resolution,
‘ notwithstanding the strength of my affection, never
‘ to listen to him, or return him the least answer, till I
‘ am assured that he not only means me honourably,
‘ but will sacrifice the fashionable amusements of a li-
‘ bertine to my peace ; for I love him too sincerely to
‘ admit of sharers in his heart. The consciousness of
‘ my own folly makes me pity the infirmities of others,
‘ and I would some time ago, have afforded an unhappy
‘ young creature, who was big with child by my wild
‘ unthinking lover, every comfort that her case requir-
‘ ed ; but she refused the offer, and went away from all
‘ her friends. I have heard that though she is since
‘ married, she is still his mistress. I could be glad of
‘ knowing the truth of this report ; but don’t care to
‘ make myself talked of by my enquiries : but I fancy
‘ that Trueman could inform me, as his uncle was the
‘ girl’s father.’

Peggy did not fail to satisfy the curiosity of her friend, by learning all she wished to be informed of from her lover. The humane heart of the lady was sensibly touched at the recital of the terrible effect the imprudence of Trueman’s kinswoman had on the life of her unhappy father ; for no one in the village had imputed his death to the right cause ; but it gave her heart
intense

intense anguish, on a nearer account, when she saw reason to fear that her lover was shackled in the chains of vice too closely for her to hope he would soon throw them off: however, an accident unriveted all his fetters, and almost in a moment worked the unhopèd for change; but before this happened, a considerable time passed, in which this benevolent lady's whole employ and delight, consisted in instructing her daughter, and relieving objects of distress.

C H A P. VI.

Miss Williams, notwithstanding the change in her circumstances, is on her arrival in London, again reduced to distress, from which she is in some measure relieved by the assistance of a stranger.

PEGGY WILLIAMS, as her father's confinement was almost at an end, began, though actuated by the most dutiful affection to him, to feel many anxieties at the thought of being separated from her dear Trueman: she made Miss Jenny the confident of this uneasiness, without any other hope, than that of unburthening a loaded heart; but the many perfections of this amiable girl had rendered her so acceptable to her benefactress, that she cast about to think of some method that might contribute to the happiness of them both; she even offered to lend Trueman money sufficient to stock a small farm, if he chose to undertake it; but he, conscious of his want of knowledge in agriculture, from a principle of honesty, declined this favour, lest his ill success should render him unable to pay what she was so generous as to offer to advance. Miss Jenny saw fresh reason to admire his steady adherence to the principles he had imbibed from his worthy uncle; for the manner in which he refused her offer, let her see the violence he did his softest inclinations, which led him to accept her bounty, as it would have enabled him to provide for his dear Peggy, and have given him the enchanting prospect of her soon becoming his wife. Miss Jenny repeated her offer with
some

some earnestness, and it was agreed among them to consult Mr. Williams, who was clearly on the side of Trueman's declining a farm, not only on the account of his want of knowledge, but of his daughter's utter inability to perform her part of the domestic duties of such a station, who as she was quite unacquainted with a country life, he said would be a burthen rather than a help to such a family ; and at the same time threw out a hint, that he had better hopes for his child, notwithstanding the present low ebb of his fortune. As this was delivered in ambiguous terms, it gave the mind of the grateful and tender Peggy not a little emotion. She saw, by the glowing red on the face of Trueman, that his fondness had taken the alarm. She made haste to dissipate his fears, and with some resolution, replied, that whatever might be her fortune in future life, she hoped nothing would make her forget the distresses she had been in, nor what she owed to the generosity that had helped to remove them. As these words were accompanied with a tender glance at Trueman, they did not fail of the wished-for effect on the heart of the young man. Mr. Williams smiled at the little flutter he had put them in, and without explaining himself farther, proposed going to London the following week. Trueman objected his not being able to disengage himself from his present master so soon, as he had agreed to serve him three months ; but on his mistress's promising to write to him, he consented to her going without him.

On Peggy's first coming to London, she went to Mr. le Brun's, but had the mortification to find the whole family out of town, and on her enquiry, was informed that the death of Miss le Brun, had been the cause of their staying much longer in the country than they had designed, as the loss of the little creature had filled them all with the deepest affliction, and had seized on the senses of her mother.

This dismal news well accounted for Peggy's receiving no answer to several letters that I should have told my readers, she sent to her late mistress. She felt for the distresses of a family where she had met with the kindest

kindest usage ; but she felt still more keenly for a father, who, she feared, would be again exposed to the miseries of want. She had placed her hopes in the disinterested compassion of her worthy master ; but she now feared that he would be too much engrossed by his own grief, to be capable of attending to the misfortunes of others : however, she waited their coming to town, maintaining her dear father by the industry of her own hands, in the meer necessaries of life.

After her being almost a month in London, Mr. le Brun returned to his house, not only to lament the loss of a beloved child, but of a tender affectionate wife, who had sunk under the excess of her grief, and survived her daughter only three months. The poor gentleman, while in this melancholy situation, had been deprived of the company of his worthy sister, by the absolute necessity there was, for one of them to be in France, as a pretender had started up, and claimed a right to all their deceased aunt possessed.

In short, these concurring circumstances deprived poor Peggy for a time of her hoped-for resource, and reduced her to great extremity. I have said, that she supported herself and father, by her own labour ; but she began to be in want of employment, and had carried home the two last of a dozen of shirts she had been recommended by her landlord, to make for a gentleman who was lately come to lodge in the neighbourhood. This person had taken notice of the pen- sive air that cast a cloud over the beauties of his plain- work woman ; the near prospect of want had encreased her thoughtfulness, when her attention was roused by his giving her a moidore, and on her offering to get change, absolutely refusing to take any. This, as she had been paid for her work as she did it, alarmed her pride and her virtue ; she had in her past life received very few pecuniary obligations from the other sex, that did not immediately tend to their own gratification and her ruin, she suspected this was a bait to entrap her chastity, and with a modest scorn returned it to the owner.

This

This unusual behaviour excited the curiosity of the gentleman, to enquire by what means a person of so elevated a way of thinking, could be reduced to poverty and distress; for he had enquired minutely into her present situation, and had, though he seemed a young man, given her this relief in consideration of her poverty, without having the least design on her person. She related to him her father's misfortunes, informed him of his present circumstances, and that he subsisted on her labour. The gentleman seemed greatly affected by her story, praised her filial piety, and attempted to encourage her to proceed in so worthy an employment. In short, she several times received assistance from his humanity, without the pain of asking: but suddenly her benefactor disappeared, leaving a letter for her, in which, to her great surprise, she found these words.

‘ **A** Fortunate event has restored me to myself, and again made a woman of your sincere friend. Keep my metamorphosis a secret, and dispose of my masculine apparel to your own advantage. I have left orders that it should be delivered to you by the woman of the house. In a little time you shall hear farther from the now happy

‘ JULIA.’

This odd billet gave her a right to several fine waistcoats, and a considerable quantity of almost new linen; but she did not know how to make good her title, without producing the letter, and discovering the secret with which she was intrusted; she therefore contented herself with receiving what the landlady was willing to own belonged to her late lodger; though she knew it fell greatly short of what was designed her. This seasonable supply enabled her to buy a few necessities for her father, whose age and infirmities began to make him need her constant attendance.

Trueman, after his separation from Miss Williams, is by the machinations of his enemy, reduced to a situation which puts his life in the greatest danger.

THEY had been in town six weeks, but had received no letter from Trueman. Poor Peggy was in the greatest anxiety at this long silence ; but as she had sent him word where to direct to her, on her first arrival, she thought it would but ill become her sex to write again, till she received an answer. At length one came : she opened it with trembling haste ; but had the mortification to see it was not wrote by the hand of Trueman, but that of Miss Jenny, her generous friend in Buckinghamshire.

This lady informed her, that the life of young Trueman had been in the greatest danger, and that he was now unable to hold a pen ; that she should have sent her word before of these terrible circumstances ; but a crime had been laid to the charge of the young man, that made it scandalous to be seen in his company : In short, that he was advertised, as having embezzelled his master Symonds's effects, and having endeavoured to make his escape from justice on a horse belonging to that gentleman. In consequence of this advertisement, he was taken up three days after she set out for London, and committed to the common prison. The horse was described, and several persons affirmed that he was seen near his father's house on such a one. His mother-in-law, with a seeming reluctance, acknowledged his coming to her house on such a beast, and made a long parade of her honesty, alledging her suspicions as the cause of her refusing to let him stay any longer there. Trueman acknowledged his coming to his father's on the creature described ; but utterly disowned any design of keeping it for his own use, and in his defence, he was obliged to give a circumstantial account of what he knew of the private character of Mr. Symonds. But this was thought only a cooked-up evasion of the truth,

truth, and treated as such by the justice, before whom he was examined. She then added, ‘ however innocent, I and some few more may think him, he is likely to take his trial among the vilest criminals, if death does not give him a release before the assizes, to which there is yet two months. You, dear Peggy, will undoubtedly feel his unhappy circumstances very keenly ; but, my good girl, as you have no guilt to reproach yourself with, I hope you will be able to bear up. You may assure yourself, that whatever is in my power to alleviate his misfortunes, shall not be wanting. The good dame Hoskins is eternally in tears, and seems incapable of any other conversation but what concerns him. She has told me a thousand little instances of the goodness of his heart, even in his infancy ; and is so positively assured that he is not guilty of what is laid to his charge, that she would, if bail could be accepted, stake the whole of her little income, that he would not fly from the prosecution. We have got him removed from among the felons ; but not soon enough to prevent his catching the jail-distemper ; however, we have some hopes of his life, as he is now at times sensible. In his delirious moments, his Peggy employs all his thoughts. Could a jury be as well persuaded of his innocence as I am of the sincerity of his love, he would be in very little danger from their verdict. If affection should tempt you to come to see this miserable object, I counsel you to stay where you are : and to prevail on you to take my advice, I once more give you my word, that he shall want for nothing that is in my power to purchase for him. I sincerely pity the distress I know this must give you ; but while you have no reason to doubt the innocence and the fidelity of him you love, I can’t help thinking yours a softer kind of misery than that which has been near eight years the portion of

‘ Your affectionate friend.’

The strong picture this lady had drawn of True-man’s unhappy situation, destroyed all Peggy’s philosophy.

sophy. She sat motionless for a few moments after she had read her letter, then starting up she cried, 'I will, I will go to the dear youth, though they should make me the partner of his pretended guilt. If he dies, I shall be the unhappy cause of his dismal end. It was to save me from the vilest of wretches, that he took the accursed journey which has been the cause of his ruin; but he shall not die alone. Forgive me heaven; but it is too much to bear.' Her voice was now lost in sobs; but a friendly torrent of tears gave ease to her almost bursting heart, and rendered her calm enough to relate to her father, who was gazing at her in a wild amazement, what it was that so deeply afflicted her.

The old gentleman had a very great regard for Trueman, whom he looked on as a deserving young man; but he was of the same opinion as Miss Jenny, and insisted on his daughter's not going to him, as she could not possibly do him any good by her evidence, and might hurt her own reputation by seeming concerned, if he should be found guilty: besides, his own unhappy condition, required her constant care: but it was with great difficulty that all these considerations kept her from him she loved. Had it not been for the sum she raised by selling the cloaths that were left her, she and her aged father must have experienced all the miseries of want; for her anxiety now made her absolutely incapable of every kind of work.

While she was in this melancholy situation, their retreat was discovered by the vile wretch her mother; who had been, like most other wicked agents, entirely neglected by her employer, as soon as she could be no farther serviceable to his design on Peggy, and he thought his revenge could be completed without her assistance. This unhappy woman was struck with remorse, at the sight of a poor young creature, who was, through her contrivance, become a perfect mope, and had lost all her sprightliness; but when she was told the horrid occasion, she shuddered at the thought of murder, for that she imagined would be her guilt, if Trueman was condemned. She would now fain have been

been reconciled to her husband ; but he, to the astonishment of Peggy, utterly disclaimed that title, and charged her, no more to look on her as her mother. As this was spoke in the height of passion, Peggy looked on it only as meant to signify, that the vile usage she had received from this unnatural parent, must cancel all the affectionate duty of a child ; but a few months discovered a more important sense to these words.

A day or two after Mr. Williams had been ruffled by the sight of his wife, Peggy received a letter, the direction of which gave her the utmost joy, as she beheld it was the hand-writing of her dear Trueman. It contained only two or three lines as follows.

‘ Dearest Creature !

‘ **I**N spite of malice and falshood, I am still alive. I
 ‘ trust in providence, I shall be able to confute the
 ‘ charge of my enemies, and live, my lovely Peggy,
 ‘ to be made amends for all my sufferings by your
 ‘ truth and sweetness. With this enchanting hope, I
 ‘ support my present weakness, though it is too great
 ‘ to let me at this time be more particular, and hardly
 ‘ gives me the power to tell you, with what sincerity
 ‘ I am,

‘ For ever yours,
 JOSHUA TRUEMAM.

The joy of her heart now diffused itself through her countenance ; she was no more that dull stupid creature she had appeared, while she believed the life of her lover in danger ; and to heighten her felicity, she received news of Mrs. Goodwin’s return from Paris. She waited on that lady, and was welcomed with a frank benevolence, that added a charm to the friendship she offered her. Peggy made a representation of her father’s distress, and he was immediately relieved.

C H A P. VIII.

Miss Williams, after being relieved by her friend Mrs. Goodwin, is much pestered by the troublesome addresses of a new lover.

SHE was now tolerably easy on her father's account, and every post brought her news that increased her hopes of soon seeing her dear Trueman. Mrs. Goodwin had a great affection for this amiable girl, and she manifested her regard for her by several genteel presents of cloaths, that had belonged to her deceased sister. These, tho' of no great value, made Peggy appear above the indigence of her present station, and set scandal's hundred tongues at work to defame her. As she did not think it necessary to acquaint the people who lived in the same house with her, by what means her dress became mended, they either believed, or pretended to believe, that she owed it to her personal charms, which had made a conquest, that she was cunning enough to improve to her advantage. As this was whispered about in the neighbourhood, it quickly reached the ears of a young gentleman, who had for some time lodged at a surgeon's in the same street; but though the cause for which he had taken up his residence there was removed, by the honest care of his landlord; yet as the danger and smart he had undergone was not effaced from his memory, he made many wise resolutions to avoid temptation, and a thousand times forswore the deceitful sex; but his philosophy lasted no longer than till chance brought before his eyes the agreeable Peggy. Her modest air, 'tis true, gave him small hopes; but he was of that race of men, who having spent the greatest part of their lives among the most abandoned of the female sex, very sagaciously make them an epitome of the whole: yet, in spite of this opinion of women in general, he was intimidated by the severity of her look, till the above mentioned whisper took off his awe. He now contracted an acquaintance with the people where she lodged, and
lost

lost no opportunity of being in her company. She was invited to partake of many little treats, which she had not the least notion were given on her account, till the rest of the company having frequently left her alone with the young gentleman, opened her eyes. She now kept in her own apartment, and the sighing swain had no way left to ease his heart, but by giving vent to his mind on paper. This he did in the following letter, sent by the penny post.

‘ Most adorable Peggy,
 ‘ **H**AD the light of the sun been denied me, I could
 ‘ have borne it patiently ; but the want of the
 ‘ superior brightness of your eyes has left me dark in-
 ‘ deed ! What have I done to be deprived of their
 ‘ transcendent lustre ? What charm has my happy rival
 ‘ (for ah your coldness tells me I have one) that eclipses
 ‘ me in your esteem ? If there be any merit in feeling
 ‘ the most tender and ardent passion, I dare be bold to
 ‘ say, I am his equal. If splendor is the wish of my
 ‘ fair, I have it in my power to make you shine in the
 ‘ most brilliant circle : if a reputable retirement is the
 ‘ choice of her I adore, not death itself shall extort
 ‘ from me a confession of my happiness : we will, if I
 ‘ am blessed with your consent, my dearest, fly from
 ‘ the noisy town, and securely give a loose to rapture
 ‘ and to love. Our bliss shall be as lasting as it is se-
 ‘ cret : a settlement for life shall take from you the pain
 ‘ of a precarious subsistence, and make you the envy of
 ‘ thousands. If these proposals are acceptable to the
 ‘ charmer of my heart, haste to tell me so, that I may
 ‘ fly to your arms.

‘ The happy, the transported,
 ‘ JOHN-HENRY FITZ-SYMONDS.’

Peggy, as is common when a letter is received from an unknown hand, cast her eyes to the bottom for the name, before she looked on the contents. This name, as it had before given her great uneasiness, did not put her much in a humour to relish the absurd and extravagant compliment with which it began ; but when she

She came to the impudent proposal of a settlement, she, blushing with indignation and shame, tore it to pieces, before she was enough recollected to remember, that the highest contempt she could have shewn the writer, would have been to send it back unanswered. This want of thought gave her the trouble of reading another from the same elegant hand, in which he pathetically complained of her cruelty in leaving him in a painful suspense, and heroically took up the resolution of dying once, rather than living always in the fear of death. This he explained, by threatening to throw himself at her feet, and receiving his doom from her enchanting lips: adding, that if her adamant heart could let her tongue pronounce the dreadful sentence that must strike him dead, his exit would be as glorious as that of Semeles, who expired in a blaze of charms.

This fine performance, which no doubt cost the writer not a little pains, would have undergone the fate of its forerunner, if Peggy had not been afraid her silence would have been construed by the assuming spark, into a consent to see him, and this fear made her take the resolution to send it back, which she did inclosed in a cover, in which she wrote with a pencil.

‘ Your impudent proposals will be always rejected
‘ with the scorn they deserve by

‘ The affronted

‘ M. WILLIAMS.

This opposition rather inflamed than cooled the wishes of Mr. Fitz-Symonds; he had made several conquests, and had acquired an easy fortune merely by his personal merit: an old maid of fifty-five falling in love with him at a ball. Astonishing that a girl, an English girl too, should reject him, when he had appeared before her in the full force of lace and embroidery, and had displayed all those self-sufficient airs, that give his countrymen an easy access to women of weak heads and great fortunes! He set his brains at work to discover the rank of the favoured lover, for whom

whom he was slighted ; for to imagine virtue the motive of her scorn, would be to contradict the principle on which the success of an Irishman with the fair is founded, namely, that no woman resists the force of Hibernian eloquence, that is not foolishly prepossessed in favour of some dull soul of her own country. This doctrine they are early taught, and too frequently teach it to their fair pupils, who are ready enough to believe them on their own report : it is by the impudence of bragging of their own exploits, that they obtain new victories, and go on to make soft hearts ach, without having one qualification above a meer brute, but a knack of uttering amorous nonsense with ease and volubility. Mistake me not, reader ; I would not be understood to affirm, that the being born on this or the other side of St. George's channel, can make a man either wise or a fool. Worth and goodness, sense and discernment, are excluded from no nation under the sun : the universal parent has confined his blessings to no one spot on earth ; all enjoy his influence, and the happy effects of his care. Then let us not, by a ridiculous fondness for our native country, imbibe the silly prejudices that make us vent national invectives. I only mean, in this digression, to caution my fair readers against the tinsel tribe of fortune-hunters. I wish for the honour of my countrywomen, I could not add that the description, but too justly suits that of the fortune-stealers too, though the Spectator makes a distinction between them. But to return :

Mr. Fitz-Symonds was extremely piqued at his ill success ; he applied to the people of the house where Peggy lived, for information ; but as all their suspicion of her having a lover, was built on the testimony of a couple of half-worn silk night-gowns, and a laced cap or two, which now becoming less fine, by being more familiar to their sight, they would willingly have retracted the before mentioned piece of scandal. Peggy paid her rent regularly, and the spark had left off treating as soon as his charmer became invisible : what motive then could these good folks have to belie her character ? They honestly told him, that she received no
visitors,

visitors, and was constantly employed in attending her father, who, they believed, was supported by the bounty of some rich relation, as his daughter had often mentioned her going to see a lady.

While he was receiving this damp to his impudent hopes, the Post-man brought a letter to Peggy; she was abroad, and the woman taking this letter and paying the postage, put a thought into Mr. Fitz-Symonds's head, that gave him a prospect of knowing what had been the cause of her coldness. He asked why the letter was not carried to the old gentleman, and was answered, his daughter had desired, on her going out, that if one came, it might be kept below till her return. He needed nothing more to convince him, that it came from a lover; he earnestly longed to read it, but this was what he thought would not be permitted him: he therefore, with an easy negligent air, complained of thirst, and desired the mistress of the house to suffer her servant to get him a pint of wine, which he would trouble her to make into a negus for him. This innocent request was, as he imagined it would be, the cause of his being left alone a few minutes, which he improved so well, as to get the suspected letter into his possession, leaving in its room a paper folded like it. Being cured by this acquisition of his thirst, he hardly stayed to taste his liquor, but hastened to a friend and countryman, who by the harmless practice of imitating the hands of several members of parliament in order to oblige his friends by franking their letters, was become an adept in counterfeiting, but had been obliged to quit Dublin for the trifling mistake of writing a gentleman's name on the back of a note, instead of doing it on the direction of a letter. In this instance he shunned popular applause; but made no scruple of valuing himself on a qualification that has led many to the gibbet. To this choice spirit, Mr. Fitz-Symonds applied, and was by him instructed in the pretty art of opening a letter, without so much as cracking the seal, which he had no sooner put in practice, than these words presented themselves to his view.

‘ My

‘ My dearest Life,

‘ **M**Y confinement is almost at an end. My cruel
 ‘ barbarous prosecutor is at last mollified by
 ‘ the tears and intreaties of the worthy Miss Char-
 ‘ lotte : that young lady has kindly interested herself in
 ‘ all my misfortunes, though she ran the hazard of her
 ‘ father’s displeasure : she has sent me money for my
 ‘ subsistence, and what was of more value, in my de-
 ‘ plorable situation, she promised to come down to pro-
 ‘ claim my innocence, as it was by her order that I
 ‘ made use of her father’s horse, though she had reason
 ‘ to fear such a step would be her ruin. Think not,
 ‘ my dearest Peggy, that any thing but a love of justice
 ‘ was the inspirer of this resolution ; but lest such a
 ‘ thought should pain your bosom, I send you the copy
 ‘ of the letter that gave me this news.

‘ Mr. Trueman,

‘ **I** Have tried incessantly to move my papa in your
 ‘ behalf ; I have also interested one who is much
 ‘ his favourite, to second my intercession. Though a
 ‘ regard to my father’s reputation, has obliged me to
 ‘ conceal your innocence, and the motive of his in-
 ‘ teracy, from the knowledge of this gentleman, I am
 ‘ sure he will be a warm advocate, as he has, unknown
 ‘ to me, been long my lover, and sees me every day
 ‘ bath’d in tears for your distress : If all our efforts fail,
 ‘ be assured I will, at the day of trial, assert your inno-
 ‘ cence as to the horse ; and my father has, of his own
 ‘ accord, agreed to acquit you of the embezzlement
 ‘ of his cash. I sincerely wish you were at liberty, and
 ‘ happy with my old school-fellow, for whom I have
 ‘ as great a friendship as ever. If you correspond with
 ‘ her, let her know, that I still love her, and wish to
 ‘ see her ; but can’t hope to do it, till I am out of my
 ‘ father’s house, as I have reason to fear he is not yet
 ‘ cured of his unlawful passion, which keeps alive his
 ‘ resentment.

‘ I would have sent you the two pictures my father
 ‘ let me keep out of Mr. Williams’s goods ; but
 ‘ can’t

‘ can’t for my life find one of them. I am afraid, how-
 ‘ ever innocent you are of what you are at present ac-
 ‘ cused of, you are not quite clear of guilt in relation
 ‘ to this pretty bauble. Tell Peggy that I can now
 ‘ think without pain of her picture’s having been the
 ‘ companion of your solitary hours, and of its seducing
 ‘ your honesty; and that she may believe you, inform
 ‘ her, that the same month that restores to her her
 ‘ Trueman, shall take from me the power of subscrib-
 ‘ ing myself by the name of Symonds, and give me a
 ‘ right to that of Stewart, which belongs to your ad-
 ‘ vocate. I am not without hopes of influencing my
 ‘ papa so far, as to prevent his appearing against you,
 ‘ and I depend on your having the generosity, for my
 ‘ sake, to stifle all thoughts of revenge against him.
 ‘ My papa is very dear to me. I cannot see his reputa-
 ‘ tion and peace hurt without the keenest anguish; but
 ‘ I will not doubt your sacrificing the mean desire of
 ‘ vengeance, to the ease of

‘ Your sincere friend,

‘ CHARLOTTE SYMONDS.’

‘ You see, my dear, what are my obligations to your
 ‘ friend. Since this I received two guineas from her in
 ‘ a paper, on the inside of which was wrote: “ I have
 ‘ prevailed: Dear Mr. Trueman, be tender of the
 ‘ character of my father; by this means you make me
 ‘ your friend for ever. I am just setting out with him
 ‘ and Mr. Stewart for Bath. You will be released for
 ‘ want of evidence, and your distresses will be at an
 ‘ end, while my poor papa’s ill health, perhaps caused
 ‘ by the uneasiness of his mind, for the injustice of
 ‘ your imprisonment, renders every day unhappy.
 ‘ You have, I am sure you have, too much generosity
 ‘ to wound the heart of a friend, by retaliating an in-
 ‘ jury on a sick old man, her father.”

‘ You see how tenderly she pleads. Shall I vindi-
 ‘ cate my innocence, and lose the esteem of one who
 ‘ may have it in her power to serve me, or what is of
 ‘ far more importance, to serve my dear Peggy? No,
 ‘ I yield to the wishes of her filial piety, and drop all

‘ thoughts of resentment. I expect to be cleared next
 ‘ week, and hope to see you the week following, I am
 ‘ for ever,

‘ Most affectionately yours,

‘ JOSHUA TRUEMAN.

Mr. Fitz-Symonds could find nothing in this letter for his purpose, till he cast his eyes on the following postscript.

‘ I shall write again, and have confidence enough in
 ‘ your love to believe you will meet me a few miles
 ‘ from London. My next shall appoint the time and
 ‘ place. Once more adieu.’

He then, unable to stifle his resentment, cried, Shall a mean wretch, delivered from a prison, have this saucy confidence, while a man of my fortune is doomed to despair? If by your address, my dear friend, I am helped to the possession of this scornful girl, I shall think no reward too great.

Animated with the hopes of gain, the young spark copied a line or two of Trueman’s letter, and did it with such a nice exactness, that it gave Fitz-Symonds hopes of bringing a plot to bear on the innocent Peggy, that would deprive her of all Protection, and throw her into his power; but as the success of this plot depended on her having no suspicion of his knowing any thing of Trueman’s circumstances, he hastened to carry back the letter, keeping only the bit of copy, as a specimen of the hand. His whole life had been a continued series of dissimulation, and he knew how, without the least difficulty, to frame any falsehood that served a present purpose: he therefore carried the letter back, and without the least appearance of confusion, demanded the paper he had left in its room, saying, that while he was alone he was writing a memorandum, and had by mistake put the letter in his pocket, instead of the paper he had been writing on. Peggy was not yet come home, nor had the change been discovered. The woman of the house in a kind of fright, asked if he had not opened it? To which he replied, that he scorned to do any thing so much below the dignity of
 a gentle-

a gentleman ; but the seal remaining unbroke, was a much better proof to the good woman, of his being ignorant of the contents, than his assertion, though he confirmed it with a ‘ devil damn me.’

At Peggy’s return, she received her letter without being informed that it had been in the possession of Fitz-Symonds. The pleasing news it brought, gave her a high delight, and she ran with eagerness to acquaint her father with the contents.

As the old gentleman had, among other complaints, a great depression of spirits, she had left a young woman, who lodged in the house to keep him company, while she was out : by her she was informed, that something he had beheld from the window, had so affected him, that he had fainted away, and had been ever since in the deepest thoughtfulness.

Peggy for a moment forgot Trueman in her concern for her father, whom she intreated to tell her, what was the cause of his present trouble. His answer was, that he had seen a woman he once loved, with the greatest tenderness ; but begged her to say no more on a subject which filled him with intolerable agony but to think of, and added, ‘ I hope heaven will not continue to punish you, my dear, for the guilt of your unhappy father.’ However, the curiosity of Peggy was awakened by these words, prudence obliged her to defer her entreaties for an explication, as Mr. Williams was extremely ill ; but by her assiduity and care, he was recovered enough to sit up the next day, which he spent at the window, in expectation of seeing again the object that had ruffled him the preceding afternoon. His daughter in vain tried to awake his attention to the concerns of Trueman, till she mentioned his wish that she would meet him. He then replied with a sigh, ‘ Mr. Trueman is a deserving young man ; but had I been wise, he would have been infinitely below you. ‘ It is with pain I see the progress he has made in your ‘ affections. Your person may yet retrieve your father’s ‘ follies, or time may make you appear in a light more ‘ suitable to the rank you ought to bear.’ She replied with the greatest concern, that she was surprised to hear

him talk in that manner, when he himself had authorized her love; 'besides,' she added, 'what have I to boast of, but infamy on the side of my mother, and your misfortunes, Sir,'—'Have involved you in ruin,' her father interrupted. 'They might have done so,' she replied briskly, 'had it not been for the interposition of him you now affect to despise: it is with grief I observe you cold to his merit.' Her father answered a little peevishly, 'His merit will not keep you from the miseries of want, nor cure you of the regret you will feel, if ever you become acquainted with the monstrous disparity betwixt you. No stain can stick on you from your mother; she is innocent as purity itself. It is I only am to blame. My present weakness will not suffer me to explain this mystery; but I am not without hopes of still placing you in a happy situation, could I again behold her who yesterday blessed my eyes, at the same time that she filled me with regret and shame; but spare me the confusion of blushing for my past follies, as the detail can only make you hate me, without being of the least service to myself: besides, he continued, if you are obstinately bent to marry a man in the lowest circumstances, of what signification will it be for you to know how much he is your inferior?'

This manner of speaking of Trueman filled the fond heart of Peggy with infinite concern: It was in vain she pleaded her many obligations to the youth: Mr. Williams still appeared averse to her becoming his wife, and even went so far as to wish she had never seen him.

At this treatment the grateful girl burst into tears, and these procured for her a kind of unwilling consent, to meet him, when she should receive notice of his coming: but the reluctance with which this was granted, gave a gloom to all her prospects, and made her appear thoughtful and uneasy, which, on her next visit, was taken notice of by her kind benefactress, who never willingly made the distressed happy by halves; she enquired into the cause of her chagrin; but Peggy, in spite of her many favours, could not conquer her
natural

natural bashfulness, so far as to make this lady the unreserved confident of the tender sentiments she felt for Trueman, and lest she should imagine her actuated by fondness, concealed the pain she suffered at her father's coolness, till Mrs. Goodwin began to grow a little angry at her reserve, when the fear of offending her best friend got the better of all her scruples, and she opened her whole soul in so sensible and pathetic a manner, that the lady promised herself an high gratification in promoting the happiness of two amiable lovers, whose affections were founded on the most durable basis, that of virtue. She removed half Peggy's cares by proposing to visit her father the following day, in order to get the better of his dislike to Trueman for a son-in-law, and to learn from him on what his romantic hopes of a brilliant fortune for his daughter, were founded.

C H A P. IX.

Peggy Williams sets out to meet her lover; and is plagued with the impertinence of her fellow-travellers.

PEGGY returned home from Mrs. Goodwin with a much lighter heart than she had had for several days, and was made still happier by the receipt of the following letter.

' Dear Creature,

' I Entreat you to set out immediately on the receipt of this in the Barnet coach, which will bring you to the inn where I have appointed a post-chaise to wait for you, which will convey my charmer to my longing arms. I have sent the enclosed note for five guineas, that nothing may hinder your compliance with my wishes. I omit all particulars till I see you,

' Only that I am for ever

' Your passionate lover,

' JOSHUA TRUEMAN.'

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There was in the stile of this letter, an audacity very different from that tender timidity and diffidence that Trueman had till now expressed ; but as the hand was apparently the same as that in which the other letters were wrote which she had before received, Peggy had not the least distrust of forgery. She felt a trifling disgust at the newly assumed assurance of her lover, and therefore keeping her letter to herself, only informed her father that she had received one, and giving him three of the five guineas, begged his leave to comply with her lover's request. This was granted with a visible uneasiness, that was perhaps, the foreboding of new misfortunes.

Peggy went in the Barnet coach the next day ; but before she set out, she sent a note to Mrs. Goodwin, to entreat that lady to defer her visit to her father till her return. The hopes of soon seeing Trueman, so engrossed her thoughts, that she gave very little heed to the extraordinary assiduities of a young gentleman, her fellow-traveller, though his behaviour was remarked by the rest of the company. He treated, indeed, all the ladies ; but Peggy, notwithstanding the plainness of her dress, received many marks of distinction, which so provoked the envy of a coquetish girl, who aimed at his heart, with no other view than to torment it, that she could not conceal her vexation, which burst out in a ‘ Lard, some men are enough to surfeit one. ‘ There is nothing in the whole earth so rude as the being particular in a mixed company. I wish I had ‘ brought with me the Academy of compliments, that ‘ you might have quoted chapter and verse ; then I ‘ could have whispered the dumb thing what to have ‘ answered, and we might have hoped the pretty dialogue would have had an end.’ Peggy was by this flippant speech enough roused from her revery, to give her the following answer. ‘ If I was deaf, madam, ‘ as well as dumb, I should not feel much regret while ‘ I saw only your lips move. I entreat you, Sir, to ‘ appease the young lady’s anger, by making her the ‘ subject of your praises ; they can be but wrong applied

‘plied then, and I faithfully promise, you cannot give me half the pain she seems to feel at present, though you contradict your senses, and make her as handsome as she is peevish.’

This reply convinced the lady that the envied girl did not want spirit to resent an affront; but as she did not value herself on her personal charms so much as on the brilliancy of her wit, Peggy’s sarcasm lost half its force, and she returned without being the least disconcerted; ‘Bless me! I thought it had been dumb show; but the Columbine is a wit, I find. Dear child, don’t put on any of your pert chamber-maid airs to me, lest your mistress should be among the round of my acquaintance.’

The dependant condition of poor Peggy kept her from giving the lady such an answer as her haughtiness deserved, and she only replied, ‘Let me be what I will, I pay for my place, and you, madam, have no right to insult me.’ The word insult was repeated with much disdain, after which the lady remained some time silent; however she was relieved from her taciturnity by the entrance of a new passenger, a gay young officer, who paid a particular attention to the witty lady; for no other reason, than because the lace on her habit, he thought gave her a right to this distinction. She practised all the coquetish airs she was mistress of, till the appearance of a pocket-glass, in which the captain adjusted his curls, that he might not appear frightful in the eyes of the ladies, informed her, that the heart she aimed to conquer, was pre-engaged, since the sipper of approbation that attended his viewing his own form, told her, as plainly as words could, that the warrior was passionately in love with himself: she knew too much of the world, to hope to supplant so powerful a rival, and therefore was contented to make herself and the rest of the company merry at the expense of this Narcissus. It was some time before the gentleman understood the drift of her ironical compliments; for the good opinion he had conceived of himself, would not suffer him to suppose, that any lady would make him the subject of her mirth. She asked

him, with an eager solicitude of look, by what insatiation he, who seemed so well fitted for the company of the ladies, was destined to the trade of war? 'Me-thinks, added she, I'd have none but rough-hewn fellows fight, that have lost all care of their complexions; for it would vex one to hear of a battle's being lost, when we owed our defeat to the disadvantage of ground, occasioned by the fear of the commanding officer's being sun-burnt.'

This thought was probably suggested to her, by the captain's keeping the hand next the sun in a glove, after having first pulled it off to shew a fine diamond ring; however, it was too bare faced a banter, not to confound him it was addressed to, and, in reality, he was horridly disconcerted, and abated much of his self-sufficient airs during the rest of the short journey.

Peggy had, by her silence and coldness, worn out the patience of the gentleman who seemed so much inclined to honour her with his addresses, and he was got into deep chat with Hillaria, the talkative lady mentioned above, when a well-dressed man rode up to the coach; and having asked Peggy, if her name was not Williams, told her that he was sent to meet her by Mr. Trueman, who had had the misfortune to sprain one of his ancles, and was unable to attend her himself; but waited her coming about two miles off.

C H A P. X.

Peggy is conducted to a dreary habitation, and put in extreme terror by Fitz-Symonds, her Irish lover. She wounds him, and makes her escape.

PEGGY left the coach, and mounted behind the gentleman without the least reluctance, firmly believing that she should soon see her faithful Trueman; but after three hours ride, she began to grow extremely uneasy, and asked her conductor, if he had not mistaken the way? He told her he was sure he was right, on which she suffered him without asking him any other questions, to proceed a little farther.

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At length they stopped at a lone house, where an ill-looking hag presented herself at the door, and with an awkward officiousness, offered to help her to alight, saying, that her master would be within in a minute. The astonished girl repeated the word master, in a wild affright, and desired to be conducted to Mr. Trueman. 'Trueman;' answered the woman, 'upon my soul, dear honey, there is none with that name upon him. 'This is the mansion of a great 'squire, and I know 'nothing of one Trueman.'

She now entered the house, which appeared to her the most desolate she had ever beheld. It was dark, and to supply the place of a candle, a greased rush was set lighted in the noſſe of a battered iron candleſtick, which the old woman held in her hand, and which gave a glimmer juſt ſufficient to diſcover the extreme naſtineſs of the habitation: but her thoughts were ſoon called off from theſe trifles, by a voice that made her tremble, as ſhe recollected it to be that of Fitz-Symonds. He called Katto two or three times, and the old creature ran with the utmoſt precipitation to let him in. Peggy followed her, reſolving, if poſſible, to ſlip out at the gate, as ſoon as ſhe opened it; but to her diſappointment, ſhe found the maſter of this dreary place was his own porter, that he had let himſelf in, and double barred the gate, and only called his houſe-keeper to bring a light. He accoſted her with a 'Well, my pretty Engliſh woman, 'you ſee I have ventured ſomething to make you happy 'againſt your will,' and then rudely endeavoured to ſnatch a kiſs. She ſtruggling, eſcaped from his arms, exclaiming aloud againſt his baſeneſs and villainy, and threatened him with the effects of her vengeance, if he offered to touch her. He laughed at her threats, and again attempted to carry her by force into the houſe; for they were in a wide place covered with weeds that was called a court yard; but at the inſtant when he thought himſelf ſecure of his prey, and while he ſmiled with an air of triumph at her feeble efforts to eſcape his graſp, ſhe ſuddenly plunged a pen-kniſe, with all her ſtrength, into his arm.

The sharpness of the pain he felt, made him now let go his hold ; but no sooner did the old woman see the blood run from her master, than she set up a dismal yell, which brought to his assistance the man who had been sent to bring Peggy, and two other ill-looking fellows. The hag talked to them in Irish, and in consequence of what she said, they disarmed the poor girl, carried her into the house, and locked her in a room that had no other furniture, besides a small flock-bed on the ground, and a couple of stools.

Here she was left several hours to ruminate on her hard fate. She was in the dark, in a wild and lonesome house, and indeed scarcely any thing seemed capable of adding to the horror of her situation ; but had her mind been more composed, her prudence would not have suffered her to have given way to sleep, lest this should have rendered her more exposed to the attempts of a brutal ravisher : her tears were her only relief, which profusely bedewed her bosom ; but when these had a little softened the anguish of her mind, she found sweet consolation in her addresses to heaven for protection.

About midnight the horrid old woman appeared again, and with the most ghastly countenance, ordered her to come with her to her master's chamber. This injunction she refused to obey, and throwing herself on her knees, intreated her for the sake of humanity, to let her escape. The house-keeper believing her fears were only on account of the wound she had given her master, tried to comfort her, by telling her, that he was in no danger, and extolling his generosity and good nature, added, that if she would be obliging, she might be mistress of the 'squire's heart and purse, ' I scorn ' him and his wealth,' she replied, rising ; and will ' preserve my person from his touch, though at the expence of my life. You may drag me to him, if you please ; but I'll never willingly go near so base a wretch.' ' O bub a boo !' cried the woman, my master a wretch ! why, he is worth seven hundred a year every day he rises, and has lady dutchesses at his devotion, as our Patrick says, who has been with
' him

‘him at London. Arrah, don’t be a fool then, and
 ‘stand in your own light, for my master is not a man
 ‘to be trifled with, I can tell you that. If you will
 ‘not go, you must be carried ; here’s a rout to make a
 ‘skittish girl yield to what she has a mind to. A hand-
 ‘some bedfellow is a sad misfortune indeed, for one of
 ‘your age. I warrant you’ll tell me another tale to-
 ‘morrow morning. Come, come along before I call
 ‘up the men.’

She then laid hold of one of her hands, when Katto was again called to attend her master ; his arm had burst out a bleeding afresh, and Patrick his footman, in vain tried to stop it. The man that had been Peggy’s conductor, who was the same that had counterfeited her lover’s hand, was dispatched for a surgeon five miles distant ; the screams and hideous outcries of the old woman informed Peggy, that her penknife had done some execution, for she bellowed out, ‘He’s gone, he’s gone, he’s dead. O my dear master ! O my heart’s blood, what will become of old Katto ; far from her own country, far from sweet Ireland : rub some tallow off the candle on the wound ; father O Brian blessed it, and gave it me to cure my fore leg. Tie the gospel round his arm. I have always been afraid for his life, ever since he left off wearing it about his neck. Oh ! he breathes, he comes to himself. Run Patrick, run, and see if the English girl be safe : O my dear sweet honey master ; why will ye die, and leave your poor old servant, in a strange place ?’ Then followed a terrific cry.

The footsteps of Patrick made Peggy turn her eyes towards the door, which, to her surprize, she found half way open. She regretted that she had not tried to escape, as she thought the fellow would lock her in ; but he seeing her sit at some distance from the door, left it as it was, and she heard him tell Katto, the house-keeper, that she was safe, but he’d warrant damnation hungry. This produced an order for Patrick to set before her some cold provisions.

While the fellow was spreading a napkin, he eyed the disconsolate Peggy very attentively. She, on her side,

side, fancied she beheld on his countenance some traces of pity : her desperate circumstances made her ready to lay hold on the least prospect of relief. She had very little money about her, having paid for her passage before she left London ; however, she had still a guinea, and some silver. If she had known the extreme indigence of Irish servants, she would have had less fear for the success of her golden bait ; for the sight of the guinea, added, perhaps, to his own humanity, had such an effect on the fidelity of Patrick, that he promised without hesitation, to get her out of the house before morning. This promise revived her hopes, and removed the anxiety of her mind, so far as to permit her to take some refreshment, of which she stood in great need, as she had tasted nothing for twelve or fourteen hours, and had endured the utmost fatigue both of body and mind great part of the time.

Mr. Fitz-Symonds had another fainting fit, occasioned by his loss of blood, and old Katto again exalted her voice, and lamented her distance from dear Ireland. In the midst of this confusion, Patrick beckoned Peggy to slip out of the room, which still remained unlocked. She took the hint, and went softly down a pair of stairs to which he pointed ; he presently followed, and giving her a key, bid her open the garden gate, and she would be in a narrow lane that led to a farm-house, where she might find shelter till day-light.

She gave him the promised guinea, and ran with nimble footsteps from the detested house. She opened the door with ease : but Patrick forgetting to inform her which way to turn, she took to that part of the lane that opened on a large common. She travelled on, but to her mortification, found, that after a walk of half a mile, she fancied was still near the front of the house she had left : It was moon-light, and she remembered the gate she had entered the evening before ; she beheld a candle moving from room to room, and did not doubt but she was missed by the careful house-keeper. This gave her almost the speed of wings,
till

till she was out of sight of the building or rather ruins.

C H A P. XI.

Peggy is found by one who had before been her friend, in a wide common, when she believed herself ready to expire : and hardly recovers her strength and spirits, before she hears a piece of news that involves her in the deepest affliction.

THE stillness of the night, the shadow of tall trees, and the screaming of owls, gave a romantic horror to all about this distressed wanderer, while the agitation and fright she had suffered, so possessed her fancy, that she formed a ravisher out of every bush. Thus oppressed, she at last sunk with weariness and terror at the foot of a large oak, and remained near two hours insensible : when she opened her eyes, it was break of day, and the sound of horses feet gave her hopes of again beholding the chearful face of man, a blessing that half a night's solitude in the midst of such dreary visions, had taught her to value. She attempted to rise in order to go toward the sound ; but found herself utterly unable to walk, and so extremely sick, that she could not hold up her head. She therefore again made the earth her bed, and remained under the friendly oak great part of the day, neither wishing, nor hoping for relief ; but in a kind of stupid languor : however, she was roused from her lethargy by the cry of dogs, and was sitting leaning against the trunk of the tree, when an agreeable young gentleman accosted her, asking her the reason of her being in such a solitary place ? Fear and bashfulness hindered her from giving him the particulars of her late distress ; but the ingenuous modesty that appeared in her look, added to her paleness and dejection, inspired him with pity ; he ceased to importune her, and giving her a crown, was going to ride off. As he turned, he asked a footman, who had overtaken him, if his lady was behind ? The fellow told him she would be up with him

him immediately. On this he halted, and told Peggy his wife had as much humanity as beauty, and would pity a young creature like her, by whatever means she was brought to distress. The lady's coming prevented her making any reply ; she was indeed a beauty, and the gladness that sparkled in her eyes at the sight of her husband made her appear more so ; he met her a few yards from the place where Peggy sat, and told her, she would not have overtaken him so soon, if he had not been withheld from the pursuit of his game by an object that had inspired him with compassion. ' What was ' it ? ' answered the lady eagerly ; ' A pretty girl, he ' replied, that seems almost ready to expire.' ' Then ' why do we stand here ? ' returned his wife, ' let's see ' if we can do the poor creature any good.' They then both rode up to her ; when the lady, as soon as she beheld her, familiarly called her by her name, though Peggy had only a distant notion, that she had somewhere seen her, but could not recollect where, till she was asked by the young lady if she had forgot the gay spark for whom she made linen a few months before. She now remembered the features of her benefactor ; but this was no time to enquire into the reason of the agreeable Julia's change of sex ; that humane lady, without asking any questions, which Peggy's present weakness would have rendered it painful to answer, gave orders to a servant to fetch a chariot to convey the poor languishing creature to her own seat. What an happy turn of fortune ! She had escaped from the house of a brutal ravisher, where she had every thing to fear that was shocking to a virtuous young woman, and was providentially thrown in the way of a friend, where she had every thing to hope from her benevolence and good nature.

Notwithstanding this happy change in Peggy's circumstances, the terror and fright she had been in so seized her spirits, that the compassionate Julia began to be in pain lest her present stupefaction should impair, if not totally deprive her of her reason. She employed the best physicians that were to be got ; who all declared, that time alone must be the remedy : but when she

she had been attended twelve days with the greatest care and tenderness, she grew conversible ; her father and lover were now almost always in her thoughts, and these dear objects engrossed too much of her care, for them not to be the first subject of her recovered speech : she wept for the distress she knew they must feel on her account, and she hastened as soon as her trembling hand could hold a pen, to inform them where she was. As the weakness of her nerves would scarcely suffer her to write intelligibly, she begged the lady of the house to direct her letters. When she told her where that was to go that was for Trueman, her spouse was present, and asked if the young man's father was not a farmer near Buckingham ? Peggy answered him that he was, which she did in some confusion, as she dreaded his knowing of the disgrace and imprisonment of her lover. ' Then I much question,' returned the gentleman, ' whether your letter will find him so near London ; for about three weeks ago, his father told me, his son was left an estate by a brother of his mother's who lived in Yorkshire ; and that he only stayed to be married to a young woman he loved, before he went to take possession of it.'

This news caused various agitations in the heart of Peggy : she looked on herself as the woman he loved ; but she could not reconcile his affairs being so well known to his father, with that deep resentment she had always heard him express for his unkindness. She enquired minutely into every circumstance that could give light into this perplexed affair, but she had soon reason to repent her curiosity. On her asking the spouse of Julia, if he knew to whom young Trueman was going to be married, he replied, ' to the daughter of a rich grazier, on whom he is to settle the greatest part of his uncle's estate.' ' Are you sure, Sir,' returned Peggy, blushing as red as scarlet, ' that you are not mistaken in the name, I know young Trueman is under some engagements to another ; and I can hardly think him base enough to forfeit his word meerly on the consideration of wealth.' ' Don't be too sure of that,' replied the gentleman, ' my intelligence is cer-
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‘tain. I myself read the writings both of the estate
 ‘and the marriage-settlement: before the charming
 ‘Julia made me the happiest of men I was a limb of
 ‘the law, and was old Trueman’s neighbour, and tho’
 ‘now I have done with the practice, as I was in the
 ‘town where he lived, I called on my old client, and
 ‘he begged me to look over the papers, that I might
 ‘give him my judgment of their validity. Except the
 ‘farmer has another son besides Joshua, the poor girl,
 ‘whoever she is, must seek another husband.’

Peggy could hear no more; the sound of her lover’s
 Christian name confirmed all her fears, the words
 ‘cruel and ungrateful!’ were all she could utter; but
 the paleness that overspread her face, told but too plain-
 ly the torment of her mind. She tore the letter she
 had just wrote, with indignation, and deferred send-
 ing that that was for her father, till she had sufficiently
 recollected herself to be able to write another, as in
 this she had mentioned the perfidious Trueman with
 a tenderness that she thought his falshood but ill de-
 served.

The company and consolation of the kind Julia,
 who did all in her power to alleviate her grief, soften-
 ed as much as possible, this unexpected stroke: she re-
 mained some days in an uneasy suspense, waiting for
 the answer to a letter she had sent her father; she had
 also wrote to Mrs. Goodwin: at length the same post
 brought her news from them both. Her father’s letter
 inclosed one from Trueman, which she opened in the
 utmost hurry; but found every fear confirmed by the
 following lines.

‘Dear PEGGY,

‘**T**HOUGH I long to see you with the utmost
 ‘impatience, an unexpected event calls me in-
 ‘to Yorkshire. I have but a moment to inform my
 ‘charmer, that her happiness is a motive that will
 ‘soften even absence itself, and make it supportable
 ‘to her

‘Sincerely affectionate

‘JOSHUA TRUEMAN.’

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As she looked on this billet as a consummate piece of hypocrisy, her pride and contempt for a while enabled her to bear up with tolerable courage; but alas! in the tender moments of solitude, she found she felt she was still in love. Her father begged her to return to town with the utmost speed, as the short sketch she had given him of the danger she had escaped, gave him fresh fears for her safety, and made him long to have her near him; he added, that he had received a supply of money from an unknown hand, that daily enquiry was made after her return, and that his own ill-health gave him apprehensions that he might soon stand in need of the last mark of her filial tenderness. She communicated the contents of her father's letter to the friendly Julia; and it was agreed that they should set out for town the following week, in that lady's chariot.

To beguile the tedious hours during this interval, and to divert the melancholy Peggy, whose inward vexation was often guessed at from swelled eye-lids, Julia gave her the reason of her strange metamorphosis; but as she could not do this, without mentioning several circumstances that made Peggy desirous of hearing the whole account of a life that seemed full of incidents, she begged her friend to indulge her with a relation of all she could remember from her infancy. To this request she complied, with the extremest good nature and affability.

C H A P. XII.

The History of JULIA.

I WAS born,' said the lady, 'in this very house. My father was left very young by his parents, in the uneasy possession of a great estate, much incumbered. In order to extricate himself from the difficulties with which he was surrounded, he took the advice of a near relation, and paid his addresses to a lady, who had no one good qualification, except the uncontrollable possession of thirty thousand pounds,

‘ pounds, can be called one. Her he married ; and
 ‘ I and one sister, were the fruit of the mercenary
 ‘ bargain.’

‘ My mother, so far from delighting in the cheerful
 ‘ duties of a wife or parent, imbittered every comfort
 ‘ her wealth would have brought my father ; by her
 ‘ ill-humour, she expected, as her fortune had contri-
 ‘ buted to his ease and affluence, that he should pay her
 ‘ an unlimited obedience ; but my father, who was a
 ‘ man of plain good sense, imagined that the advan-
 ‘ tage of fortune could not alter the order of nature,
 ‘ and give a woman a right to assume an authority over
 ‘ her husband. Their union was a marriage of con-
 ‘ veniency rather than love, and he felt none of those
 ‘ extravagant fondnesses that often make a man laugh
 ‘ at, and comply with the unreasonable requests of a
 ‘ wife he loves, till he has lost the power of contradic-
 ‘ ting her.

‘ The only instance in which I can recollect my hav-
 ‘ ing heard my mamma speak of him with pleasure,
 ‘ was her having, to satisfy her vanity, teized him till
 ‘ she had made him purchase a title. This sacrifice to
 ‘ her pride, gave my father a good deal of pain, as
 ‘ he hated ostentation, and the glitter of life ; but it’s
 ‘ consequences were quite insupportable to one of his
 ‘ temper. While she was plain Mrs. Webster, a
 ‘ coach and four satisfied her ambition, and this man-
 ‘ sion-house was the place of her summer residence ;
 ‘ but now every thing was antique, was ridiculous
 ‘ for a woman of her rank. In order to get into
 ‘ the polite world, she was sick, and a favourite phy-
 ‘ sician prescribed Bath-waters, as the only remedy.

‘ My mother, in this place of gait and expence,
 ‘ got an habit of play, and contracted several debts of
 ‘ honour, which she kept a secret from my father.
 ‘ These often put her to straits, that rendered her tem-
 ‘ per naturally none of the best, extremely harsh and
 ‘ disobliging. She was poor, in the midst of wealth,
 ‘ as her expences constantly exceeded my father’s al-
 ‘ lowance, though that was very handsome for a lady
 ‘ of

of the least oeconomy. The clamours of unpaid tradesmen at last opened his eyes to her ill conduct, and he determined to take on himself the management of his fortune, lest he should quickly have none to manage. The regulation of mine and my sister's education, and her own private expence were now the only province left her; but how dearly should we have regretted her having even this, had providence continued her life!

My father had, on his marriage, jointured her in his whole estate, consequently my sister and I had a right to all he possessed after the decease of my mother, whose fretful temper, and frequent application to a physician, had rendered her constitution too weak to give him much hopes of a male heir; yet to such a pitch did she carry her neglect of us her children, that I myself was obliged to the son of my mother's house-keeper for my learning to read. My father, as he found no comfort at home, became a meer sportsman, and was almost always on horseback, and I have past many weeks, without seeing a living creature, except the servants of the family.

I bore this with very little pain till death took from me my sister; I was then twelve years old, and almost as ignorant as an uninstructed savage, for I was never admitted to the company of my mother, nor suffered to come out of the nursery, which she never vouchsafed to enter.

The house-keeper, who was a good sort of a woman, and pitied my forlorn condition, though she durst not shew her concern, engaged one of the footmen to teach me to write. My mother, by accident saw this man come out of the nursery; and that she might have a pretence to keep me still closer confined, improved the incident, and made a tale of it to my father. I was removed to the remotest part of the house, and not suffered to converse with our own domestics, lest my great fortune should inspire some of them with the thought of carrying me off. How often have I envied the condition of a poor girl, that
I saw

“ I saw from the window of my prison, come daily to
“ fetch the scraps of my father’s table!

“ My solitude was rendered just bearable by the
“ kindness of our house-keeper, who was the only
“ person I was suffered to speak to. She furnished me
“ with books, and instructed me as much as the duties
“ of her employment would give her leave. I once
“ asked to let Tommy, her son, who had been my
“ school-master, come and keep me company. She
“ smiled, and told me, he was now too big to be per-
“ mitted to enjoy that honour. “ He has,” said she,
“ been making me the same request; but I am afraid,
“ my dear Julia, his thoughts are less innocent than
“ yours, since he was much offended at my refusing
“ to comply with his desire.” “ I was really so inno-
“ cent or so childishly ignorant, that I saw no reason
“ for the house-keeper’s scrupulosity, any more than if
“ Tommy had been of my own sex, and replied, that
“ I was sure I should love him dearly as long as I
“ lived, since if he had not taught me to read, I should
“ have been the most forlorn creature breathing. She
“ one day told me my mamma was extremely ill, and
“ the doctor gave but little hopes of her life, when I
“ was so far from feeling any of the tender yearnings
“ of filial affection, that I rejoiced at the news, in
“ hopes that her death would put an end to my con-
“ finement. The good woman reproved my want of
“ concern, and told me her Tommy would not behave
“ so if she was sick. I replied, Nor I neither, if my
“ mamma loved me as well as I was sure she did her
“ son. “ I have seen you, dear Gibson, I added, sell
“ your cloaths, that Tommy might have learning,
“ while my mother keeps me locked up, that she may
“ spend what my papa allows for my education and
“ dress, in gaming. What have I to love her for?
“ I love you better by half. I love you for Tommy,
“ as well as myself, and if I live to be a woman, I will
“ shew that I love you both.”

“ She left me without making any answer to this
“ childish prattle, nor I believe was she able to make
“ any, for her face was wet with tears.

“ Three

JOSHUA TRUEMAN. 141

“ Three or four days after this, my mother died, without so much as asking to see me. I was taken from my prison, in order to be measured for mourning; and as soon as Mrs. Dupin, the coat-maker, had done with me, I was again marching up to my melancholy retreat, but was met by my father, whose face I had not seen for four months. He looked tenderly at me, and asked me where I was going? I told him, to the place where my mamma had kept me for a long time. He now took hold of my hand; led me back into the parlour, and asked Gibson, our house-keeper, the reason of my shocking dishabille. She told him, it was her ladyship’s pleasure, I should never be dressed. I saw my father bite his lips in great vexation, and heard him reply, “ Is this a dress for the heiress of my estate? See that Julia, for the future, wants for nothing that is fit for a girl of her expectations. I dread enquiring into the qualifications of her mind, lest I should find that as shamefully neglected as her person.” I replied with vivacity, “ No, indeed, Papa, it is not; for Tommy Gibson has taught me to read, and Jonathan to write; and I should have learnt to cast accounts too, if my mamma had not caught him coming out of my room, and forbid his speaking to me.” “ He held up his hand with astonishment; but said nothing.

“ From this time I was treated with as much flattery and respect as I had before been with disregard, by all except the house-keeper. I was a little angry at her frequent admonitions to be humble; but I was more so, that I did not see her son, whose congratulations on my change of circumstances, I thought would have given me more satisfaction than I could have received from the tongues of thousands. I was several times going to ask the reason why I did not see him; but a sort of bashful diffidence and shame kept me silent, till one day, I heard my father tell Gibson, he had found out a master for her son.

“ I was so utterly unacquainted with the customs of the world, that I thought I saw Tommy already in
 ‘ a livery

‘ a livery ; my blood boiled with indignation, and I
‘ cried out in a great flutter, Dear Sir, will you let him
‘ that taught me to read be a footman ? I’ll give my
‘ mamma’s best diamond ear-rings, with all my heart,
‘ to keep him from going to service. My father laugh-
‘ ed at my hurry, and told me, I need not part with
‘ my ornaments, since the profession he had chose for
‘ my school-master would be no dishonour to him, if
‘ he had been born a gentleman. His mother thanked
‘ my father for his care, and talked of sending for her
‘ son the next week. I was not yet thirteen ; but the
‘ few months I had been in the world, had greatly in-
‘ larged my ideas. I expected the appearance of the
‘ youth with a solicitude that bordered on impatience.
‘ I pictured him in my imagination, such as he was
‘ the last time I beheld him, a pretty boy of twelve
‘ years old ; but how agreeably was I disappointed,
‘ when I found myself addressed in the most respectful
‘ manner, by a tall genteel young man, almost six-
‘ teen ; for my own part, the surprising alteration I
‘ beheld in his person, kept me mute with astonish-
‘ ment, while he, on his side, seemed as much em-
‘ barrased. From this interview, I may date the loss
‘ of my heart, if that can be said to be lost, that is in
‘ the possession of an honest man. Gibson, who was
‘ present, when we met, saw farther into the reason
‘ of our mutual confusion than we ourselves did, and
‘ thought herself bound in honour and gratitude, to
‘ put a stop to an intercourse, that might in its effects,
‘ be extremely offensive to my father, and involve her
‘ son in an hopeless affection for one, too much above
‘ him, for him ever to expect a return. She knew the
‘ penalty annexed to the running away with an heiress,
‘ and dreaded lest the heat and impetuosity of youth,
‘ might carry him beyond the restraints of prudence ;
‘ she therefore declined my papa’s offer for her son,
‘ and he was dispatched the next day to an uncle he
‘ had in London, to wait there till something fell, that
‘ she thought for his advantage. I in vain endea-
‘ voured to smother my discontent at this separation.
‘ I was but an ill dissembler : she saw through the pre-
‘ tended

tended reasons for my chagrin, yet thought it better to conceal her suspicions.

Two years passed on without my ever seeing the agreeable Tommy, and I observed Gibson carefully avoided mentioning him in my hearing. When I was near fifteen, my papa fell in love with a young lady, the daughter of a neighbouring gentleman. He possessed twice the estate that her fortune could answer, but as the whole of this fortune was settled on me, as my mother's heiress, he could make her no settlement, and her father would not consent to the match. Thus I innocently became the bar to my father's happiness, and the object of his displeasure. He at last, however, married her, contrary to the express command of her parents, and they made use of her disobedience as an excuse for bestowing what was designed for her fortune, to double the portion of her younger sister, who was more a favourite.

My mother-in-law was but five years older than myself; yet she assumed a most arbitrary authority over me. I was not indeed locked up, as I had been during the life of my own mamma; but she took upon herself the task of regulating my conduct, even in the minutest trifles, suffering me to have no will of my own; but guiding me like a perfect child.

I had too much spirit to bear this usage patiently. As Gibson was the only person who, I thought, would pity me, I complained to her of this treatment; my mother-in-law overheard my complaint, and though the good woman had said nothing in the least disrespectful of her ladyship, her pride was affronted, and she told my father, who was now a doating husband, that she would never live in a house with any body that should dare to make saucy appeals to her servants. Gibson, the faithful Gibson, was therefore discharged, while my heart bled for her distress, from my knowing that she had no resource but my father's friendship. The time the poor woman was out of business, whatever I could possibly

‘ possibly spare, from my pocket-money, I gave her;
‘ but alas! it was soon out of my power to contribute
‘ to her relief; for I was watched by a creature of my
‘ mother’s, who seeing me go into her apartment,
‘ took it into her head to fancy there was a clandestine
‘ correspondence carried on betwixt me and young
‘ Mr. Gibson, our late housekeeper’s son, though I
‘ had not so much as seen him, and was so awed by
‘ the silence of his mother about him, that I durst not
‘ mention his name. From hence I was commanded
‘ not to demean myself by keeping company with ser-
‘ vants, and absolutely forbid seeing or speaking to
‘ Gibson. I however, intrusted a servant maid, in
‘ whom I had some confidence, to carry the poor
‘ woman five guineas; and to acquaint her, that I
‘ could not visit her, but would be her friend as long
‘ as I lived. This girl saw Mr. Gibson her son, and
‘ he was imprudent enough to intrust her with a letter
‘ for me, which never came to my hands; for she
‘ was not proof against the reward she should get by
‘ betraying a secret of such importance. He has
‘ since told me, that this letter contained very little
‘ more than grateful acknowledgements for my kindness
‘ to his mother, and a pathetic lamentation that the
‘ inequality of our stations forbid his even hoping to
‘ be happy; yet my mother-in-law had the address
‘ to persuade my father, that nothing could secure my
‘ person from the attempts of this youth, but sending
‘ me out of the kingdom. He complied with the pro-
‘ posal, and I was carried to France, under the pre-
‘ tence of improving my education, having for my
‘ governess, a person of my mother-in-law’s chusing,
‘ who had all the strictness of a Spanish duenna.
‘ This sage person lodged me in a family in Paris,
‘ to which she was related. The mean appearance of
‘ every thing about me, gave me at first some disgust;
‘ but when she told me she acted according to the in-
‘ structions of her lady, my mother-in-law, I knew it
‘ was in vain to complain. By degrees, I forgot all
‘ the pomp of life, and could eat a hearty meal of
‘ whatever

‘ whatever was set before me; but I could not help
 ‘ being filled with indignation, when I reflected how
 ‘ little my education would be improved by my living
 ‘ in a dirty house in the suburbs; and my never being
 ‘ suffered to appear in a manner suitable to the rank I
 ‘ was destined to fill. My dress was ordered by my
 ‘ good mamma, to be extremely plain, and from the
 ‘ appearance of every thing about me, no one could
 ‘ have the least suspicion, that I was heiress to above
 ‘ two thousand a year.

‘ But all these mortifications I should have borne
 ‘ with tolerable patience, if I could have escaped the
 ‘ notice of the religious; my governante was a papist
 ‘ in disguise, and from her zeal for the welfare of my
 ‘ soul, committed me to the care of a good priest of her
 ‘ acquaintance, who cheerfully performed the task of
 ‘ endeavouring to make me a convert. His arguments
 ‘ indeed staggered me, and made me doubt the truth
 ‘ of the belief I had hitherto professed; and I make no
 ‘ doubt, but that he would have made a good catholic
 ‘ of me, if I had not accidentally been informed, that
 ‘ my pious governess was in league with the doctor, to
 ‘ endeavour to make me relish a cloister; and that not-
 ‘ withstanding the sanctity she put on before me, she
 ‘ was not so abstracted from the world, as to refuse a
 ‘ large sum which she was to receive from the superior of
 ‘ a convent, if she could persuade me to take the veil.

‘ The person who gave me this information, was
 ‘ the youngest daughter of the man at whose house we
 ‘ lodged: she was herself a nun, and had been em-
 ‘ ployed by the priest, to paint the charms of a life se-
 ‘ cluded from the vanities and cares of the world, in
 ‘ the most flattering colours. She at first began to fulfil
 ‘ her commission in such a manner, as would have given
 ‘ satisfaction to her employers; but the frequent sighs
 ‘ that interrupted her romantic descriptions of the
 ‘ sweets of a retired life, gave me a suspicion, that
 ‘ what she said, did not come from her heart. I told
 ‘ her that I did not know but some people might be ca-
 ‘ pable of relishing the fine scenes she painted; but that
 ‘ for my own part, I was not formed for a cloister. I

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‘ had

‘ had yet met with very little happiness from the tender sympathies of relative affection ; but I had entertained a hope that a name dearer than that of child or parent, would give me a taste of the sweets of friendship and love. I added, that those who had in early life been happy in the fondness of their parents, might forego, without much regret, the enjoyments which they had found by experience to be nothing but vanity ; but that I should never be able to persuade myself to resign, without trial, the prospects that appeared to me so enchanting as that of giving happiness to, and receiving it from, a deserving man.

‘ She smiled at my warmth ; for I spoke with some emotion ; and told me, she wished, young as I was, I had not seen some gentleman that was the inspirer of my aversion to a religious life. “ Oh, Miss !” she added, “ would you avoid deceit and ruin, take shelter in a convent, from the perjuries of man : they smile but to deceive, and vow, but to undo.” “ I replied briskly, as I saw she was a good deal moved, that I thought I had as much reason to suspect, that she had been forced from the world by some disappointment in a mere mortal passion, as she had to think, a particular man was the cause of my wishing not to leave it. She answered with a sigh, that perhaps both might be true ; but that whatever was the cause of her vocation, those hearts were most acceptable to God, that were unstained with earthly desires, and where the first choice was fixed on heaven, the mortification of a recluse life would be less painful, and the assurances of a reward more enlivening and certain. “ But if my first choice is for this world,” I replied, “ would it not be prevarication, to pretend to a divine call ?” Certainly,” she returned ; “ but believe me, my dear, when I tell you, that a young girl like you, often mistakes that for deliberate choice, that a few years convince her, was no more than the roivings of Imagination. I myself, when I was fourteen, thought a gay young spark, who was pleased to make himself merry at my expence, born to render me happy, when a year or two more, taught me to despise the coxcomb.” I returned, a little nettled, “ that

that I thought I should never choose one of that character, and continued, "you forget, Miss, that the religion I have been educated in, admits of no nuns professed, though we have many voluntary virgins amongst us. I can see no reason that a woman should bind herself by a vow, to perform what she may do without any such awful solemnity." "You talk," she returned, "like one unacquainted with the world. Do you think it possible to be in the midst of temptation without wishes, without desires that would sully the purity of your mind, and make it unfit for the raptures of divine love?" "Tell me ingenuously," "I replied," "does the gates of a cloister shut out every intruding idea, that would disturb your devotion?" "Ah, no," she returned; with her eyes bathed in tears, "I confess they have no such power; but if we have our wandering moments, what must be the dangers that surround those, that have no such tie on their souls, but are left to the guidance of their own wills." "I told her, I had none of these terrible thoughts of the world she would inspire me with; and that I was determined to try some of its gratifications, at least, before I bid it a final adieu.

"I had many conversations with this nun; but I observed the more I talked with her, the less warm she appeared in her arguments for a retired life, and I frequently fancied her eyes seemed swelled with weeping: at length we grew so intimate, that she made me the confidant of her griefs, and confessed, that she had been determined to chuse the cloister, more from pride, and a spirit of revenge, than from any motive of real piety. I, as it was natural, asked how, if she herself was unhappy, she came to be so strenuous an advocate for my embracing a way of life, that might make me her companion in misery. She replied, in a kind of confusion, that my years had made her hope my heart might be disengaged; but she had another reason for what she had said to me. I insisted on knowing what that was; she then, after I had promised to let what she had to tell me,

‘ remain a secret, informed me of her being employed
‘ by her spiritual director, to use all her art to insinuate herself into my affection ; and, if possible, to influence my choice for a convent. So far I heard patiently ; but when she added, it would be prudent in me to dissemble my dislike to my becoming a nun, lest they should force me into a monastery, from which I should find it difficult to deliver myself, I shuddered with horror, and resolved to escape, at any rate.

‘ I had, unknown to my governess, a pair of fine ear-rings, and a diamond necklace that had been my mother’s, which I had brought away by stealth, in hopes of meeting with some opportunity of conveying them to poor Gibson, whose misfortune sat heavy on my mind, as I knew it was affection to me, that was the cause of her being, as I imagined, destitute of the necessaries of life ; but as I had met with no such opportunity, I now thought providence had reserved them for the means of my own escape. I told my friend the nun, of the jewels, and she got them disposed of for me. I begged her to keep the cash, till I should have occasion to make use of it, as I resolved to take no method that could possibly impeach my character, nor endeavour to make my escape, till I was sure nothing but flight could secure my liberty : but it was not very long before I was under the necessity of applying to my banker ; for my pious governess, as she was likely to lose her promised bribe through my obstinacy, grew extremely peevish and insolent : one day, on my insisting on going to the opera ; she told me such places were unfit for me to appear in, who was so soon to be devoted to the exercises of religion. I seemed at a loss to guess her meaning ; and told her, I did not see how innocent diversions could be at all unfit for one born to possess a good fortune, which she knew I was, though my mother had thought proper to make me appear in a despicable light among strangers.’ “ My lady, she answered in a canting tone, “ had a regard for your soul’s health, when she ordered

“ dered

"dered you to be kept from the vanities of this enticing world ; and if you loved yourself as well as I love you, you would consent to the being placed still farther out of its reach." " And pray," I replied, " not a little offended at her hypocrisy," " if you despise the world so much, how came you to continue in it so long ? one would think so elevated a piety as yours, would not have suffered you to grow grey in this sink of corruption and folly." This reply threw her off her guard ; and she, trembling with passion, said it was not her inclination, but her station in life, that had kept her in the world. If she had been born to my fortune, heaven should have had her vows ; and she would try to recommend herself to the favour of God, by snatching me as a brand out of the burning, by making a pious and holy nun, of a light unthinking heretic.

This plain confession of her design provoked me beyond all patience, and I asked her, what was to be her share of my worldly inheritance, when her holy design had taken place ; for I supposed she deserved the character the Devil gave of Job, that she would not serve God for nought ? I then, unable to restrain my vexation, left the room ; but I heard her mutter as I went out, that I should soon see reason to repent my pride. This menace hastened my resolution to fly to England ; but how to get a disguise that would secure me from the knowledge of my government, or those she might send after me, was a subject of serious consultation betwixt me and the friendly nun : and at last, she thought of a scheme that gave us great hopes of success. She had a brother who was but lately dead, who had been a subaltern officer. This youth, she told me, was much of my size, and as some of his regimentals were still in her father's house, she advised me to make a confident of the only maid-servant her father kept, whom she could promise, from her own knowledge of her disposition, would at least be faithful, if she could do me no service. I took her advice, and this woman helped me to a suit, which had been her young mas-

ter's, that fitted me exactly, and by her assistance, I, without being discovered, procured every thing necessary to equip me in the dress of a young gentleman.

The night before that designed for my departure, I was informed by my faithful friend, that my enemies were consulting measures for surprizing me, and placing me in a convent far distant from Paris. This news made me sensible, that nothing ought to make me defer my flight. I took leave of this worthy woman; many tears were shed on both sides, and on my going away, she put into my hands a paper filled with many useful remarks.

I got safe to London, though I was once asked news of myself before I reached Calais; but as my followers had not the least notion of my disguise, I boldly answered I had seen no lady. The first house I lodged at, was that where you saw me. I had all my life been kept from any of those diversions, that young minds call pleasure; I therefore determined, while my cash lasted, and I was safe from scandal, to take, under the appearance of a young fellow, my share of every fashionable entertainment, as far as was consistent with innocence; and I had the pleasure of remarking amongst my gay companions, that an air of levity was often the worst crime that could with truth be laid to the charge of many a spark who bore a very sad character: so fond is an uncharitable world of judging from the worst appearances, while the truly good man can't look grave without being, by the same world, branded for an hypocrite.

About six weeks after I came to town, I read a paragraph in the public papers that informed me of my father's being dangerously ill at his country-seat. Filial affection filled my eyes with tears, and I hurried home to hide this disgrace to my manhood. While I was thus disordered, I, without design, jostled from the wall a genteel young gentleman, when common civility made me ask pardon for my rudeness; but I had not pronounced five words, before

fore he seized my hand, crying in a transport, "The voice of my dearest Julia!" I had hid my face as much as possible with my hat; but his exclamation caused me to drop my precaution, and I looked full at him. I can't describe to you the mixture of shame and joy I felt, when I saw before me Mr. Gibson, that dear youth, who, notwithstanding the disparity of our circumstances, had been the inspirer of many a soft inclination. I was almost ready to sink at his feet, which he observing, intreated me to go with him into a tavern, adding, that I spoke so like a lady whose loss he lamented, that he could not help being surprised. I at first hesitated, whether I should comply with his proposal; but he artfully begging me to go with him to drink the lady's health, I fancied, as he intended I should, that he did not believe me to be any other than what I appeared, and went with him, big with the hopes of learning the true state of his heart in regard to myself: for I imagined the men made no scruple of owning their little hypocrisies to one another; but we were no sooner out of observation, than he, with the most tender languishment of look and voice, asked me, how I could believe my image had made so slight an impression on his heart, as to permit any disguise to conceal the charming Julia. "O madam," he continued gravely, "pardon this presumption. I cannot suppress the extatic joy I feel at seeing you safe, though I make no doubt, but that this dress is to favour the designs of some more happy man, whose lot the agonies of disappointed love will make me envy."

I blushed with shame and vexation at this rant, and thought his confidence merited the little punishment of continuing some time in an error, with respect to his having a rival. I therefore replied, with as much coolness as I could assume, that whatever might be my good opinion of any particular man, none was the motive of my present appearance; since to preserve myself from being for ever secluded from the world, I had been forced to appear in a dress of which

‘ I was heartily weary, since it exposed me to declarations I should not have expected.

‘ He seemed confounded at my reserve, and at a loss what to reply. I gave him time to recollect himself, by asking news of his mother, when he told me that she was well, and in a much happier situation than when I left her, for an old rich uncle was dead, and had bequeathed her an easy fortune; and then added, “ You will permit me, madam, to shew my gratitude for the many kind offices you have done my mother, though your coldness throws a damp on every presumptuous hope I have entertained for myself. The greatest satisfaction I ever found in being constituted my uncle’s heir, arose from the thought that it would, in the opinion of the world, a little lessen the distance betwixt me and the charming Julia, and at least vindicate her calling me her friend, though her judgment might think me unworthy of a more tender title.”

‘ While he spoke this, he watched my eyes with a lover’s concern, but whether the unexpected meeting, or the softness my mind had been inspired with, by the news of my father’s illness, or the natural weakness of my own heart, made my looks incapable of countenancing the coldness of my tongue, I know not, but he gathered such courage from the complacency with which I regarded him when he spoke, that he pleaded his passion with the utmost energy, and seemed to have forgot all thoughts of a rival.

‘ But not to keep you in suspense, by circumstances which, however interesting to us, can at most be but trivial to others, I was by him introduced to his mother, who then made a genteel figure in life. She went with me the next day, and introduced me to my father, who was dying, though he was enough in his senses to give me his paternal blessing, and to command me, to allow my mother-in-law a genteel annuity during her life, as her extravagance had disabled him from saving her a fortune out of the annual income of his estate.

‘ On

‘ On his decease, I was absolute mistress of myself and a large estate, and my name being Gibson, informs you, what I did with both. I have not yet repented my choice, nor, I believe, am likely to do so; for my husband, without the sneaking meanness of complying with unreasonable desires, because I was his superior before marriage, shews his affection, by endeavouring to correct the little imprudences that my want of knowledge of the world would make me guilty of, at the same time that he treats me with the greatest respect and tenderness.’

C H A P. XIII.

Miss Williams returns to town, when Fitz-Symonds offers to marry her; but on being rejected, arrests her father, who is relieved by Mrs. Goodwin; and this lady places them both in an easy situation.

THE particulars of Julia's history was the subject of several conversations, and served a little to divert the mind of Peggy; but when alone, this poor young creature was a prey to the extreme anguish. Even the happiness of the benevolent Julia, blessed by the man she loved, gave her heart, fond of increasing its own torment, exquisite misery, by shewing the bliss she had lost: when the painful comparison had almost driven her to madness, a recollection that him she lamented, was unworthy of her love, or he could not have been capable of baseness, gave her a momentary relief, and pride and contempt succeeded in the place of tenderness. Thus her bosom by turns was racked by contrary passions; but as the prevailing bias of her soul was softness and love, her disappointment settled into a deep and fixed melancholy. In this condition she was brought to town by her friend. Her terrors and griefs had so altered her person, that she was hardly known by her father.

The old gentleman had, during her absence, received at different times to the amount of ten guineas, without knowing who was his benefactor; but Peggy

had not been with him three days before the mystery cleared up. A servant in livery had been to enquire for her almost every day for the last fortnight of her being in the country. This man was told by the people of the house, of her return, and in a few hours, a chariot stopt at the door, out of which stepped the accomplished Mr. Fitz-Symonds. He begged to speak with her; but the condition to which she was reduced, rendering her intirely averse to company, her father waited on the gentleman, who glossed over as well as he could, the trick he had played Peggy, and in short, very honestly offered to marry her. Mr. Williams was so dazzled by his proposal as to forget all his resentment; he even became earnest with his daughter to revenge herself on an unworthy lover, who slighted her virtue, and to accept of the advantage offered her; but no arguments could prevail on her to see this intriguing gentleman, whose present behaviour she attributed to the fear of being called to an account for his forgeries; and insisted on the door's being shut in his face, if he should dare to make a second appearance.

The woman of the house so far fulfilled her commission, as to acquaint him at his chariot-door with her orders, which so provoked the haughty Hibernian, that he swore by St. Patrick, he would be even with her for her scorn. This threat gave Peggy very little concern, till an officer in the disguise of an old woman arrested her father at the suit of Fitz-Symonds, for upwards of ten pounds, which had been lent to him by the said Fitz-Symonds, at several times.

The uneasy situation of her mind had hitherto kept her from attending Mrs. Goodwin, yet without her assistance she knew not how to extricate her father from this difficulty. Julia had stayed in town but four days; she was therefore forced to undertake the disagreeable task of acquainting this lady, on her first visit, of the absolute need she stood in of present succour. Her dejected looks sufficiently spoke the uneasiness of her mind. The good-natured Mrs. Goodwin no sooner heard of this fresh perplexity, than she sent a person to
be

be bail for Mr. Williams, and he was delivered from the fangs of a rapacious bailiff.

As Peggy's melancholy still continued, the worthy lady insisted on being made acquainted with all her griefs : she informed her of Trueman's perfidy, with every particular she had learnt from Mr. Gibson ; and even shewed her the last letter she had received from her false lover. Mrs. Goodwin had a strong persuasion that there was some mystery in the affair, that time would clear up ; but she kept this notion to herself, lest she should amuse the poor girl with false hopes ; contenting herself with endeavouring to calm her mind, and alleviate every care, by a thousand acts of tenderness and friendship. She procured for Mr. Williams a small place, and took Peggy into her own family ; but love left her scarcely the capacity of relishing this change in her circumstances.

Peggy had too about this time another occasion of gratitude to heaven : Mr. Symonds, her first persecutor, paid the debt we all owe to nature, and to make the poor girl some amends for the miseries he had made her suffer, he had left her three hundred pounds. What delight would she have received from this legacy, if her Trueman had been faithful ! how cheerfully would she have made him the immediate possessor of a much larger sum, if providence had bestowed it on her ; but alas ! her mind was now a cheerless void, that found no satisfaction in any thing. She received several letters, that by the superscription, she believed came from Trueman ; but as she was fully persuaded of his falsehood, and considered him as the husband of another woman, she consigned them to the flames the moment she received them, without deigning to open them : however, at last one fell into the hands of Mrs. Goodwin ; she desired Peggy to permit her to read it, which she with some difficulty agreed to, on condition she did not let her know the contents, and burnt it as soon as she had perused it. The letter ran as follows.

‘ Dear

‘ Dear Miss Peggy,

‘ **W**HAT am I to think of your silence? I have
 ‘ now sent you five letters since I received an
 ‘ answer. Have you forgot the once happy Trueman?
 ‘ what have I done to merit this coldness? what will be
 ‘ all the advantages of fortune, if I am not blessed with
 ‘ your love? O my charmer! ease my aching heart. I
 ‘ can hardly be grateful to heaven for the blessings of
 ‘ providence that surround me, while I am in doubt of
 ‘ your sharing them with me. The necessity of my af-
 ‘ fairs oblige me to stay here some time longer: but if
 ‘ you will not vouchsafe me an answer, I will neglect
 ‘ all to come to town, to learn the occasion of your dis-
 ‘ pleasure, and, if possible, to remove it. I have gi-
 ‘ ven you the reason of my being so far removed from
 ‘ what I hold most dear on earth, in my former let-
 ‘ ters, which I cannot doubt came to hand, and I
 ‘ long before now expected your kind congratulations
 ‘ at my approaching good fortune. O my dearest, you
 ‘ are as dear as ever to my heart, and I am but half
 ‘ possessed of my uncle’s estate, till my Peggy is made
 ‘ happy by sharing it with

‘ Her for ever affectionate,

‘ JOSHUA TRUEMAN.’

This letter did not entirely satisfy Mrs. Goodwin, as it in part agreed with what Mr. Gibson told Peggy; but it still increased her persuasion, that time would give light into this perplexed affair. She could not look on Trueman as so consummate a villain, as to endeavour to make one woman believe he loved her with the utmost fondness, when he had willingly given his mind to another. She thought, indeed, it was possible he might be married; but she imagined if that was the case, interest alone had been his motive; but as it was equal to Peggy if he was another’s, by what means he became so, this prudent lady was afraid of saying any thing to her, that might extenuate his guilt, lest the weakness of her heart might betray her to forgive him, and this forgiveness should produce a reconcilia-
 ciliation,

ciliation, that is almost always attended with ruin to the unhappy fair, whose easiness ventures an interview with the man she has once loved.

It is impossible to be indifferent to an object that we have long thought on with the highest pleasure, till time, that calmer of the human breast, has taught us to separate our ideas : when a woman can think coolly on happiness, without annexing to the thought a formerly favoured lover, she may venture to see the perfidious man without fear of danger ; but when this is really the case, she will have lost all eager desire of seeing him ; therefore if a forsaken damsel should be enticed by a specious pretence of begging forgiveness, to admit to her company the repenting betrayer, let her tremble, lest his repenting in jest, should give her cause to do so in reality.

Considerations something like these made Mrs. Goodwin comply with Peggy's request that she would not tell her the contents of the letter. She recollected that her brother had an acquaintance, who was but lately come from the very town from whence the letter was dated : to this gentleman she applied, and was told that a person of the name of Trueman had been left heir to an old miserly farmer, that the young fellow came to take possession a few days before he left the place, and brought with him a wife to whom he heard he was just married. This confirmation of Mr. Gibson's story erased every doubt of its truth, and made Mrs. Goodwin believe Peggy's lost lover deserved no other answer but silence and contempt. She determined, if possible, to prevent any future epistles from reaching the hand to which they were directed, for fear some soft moment might tempt her to open them, and the professions of fondness they contained, should intender a mind already but too much wounded by his infidelity. She even imposed it as a law on her self, never to mention him to the melancholy Peggy ; and set herself with great assiduity, to divert her mind from thinking of a wretch whom she believed unworthy of the least regard. By degrees the unhappy maid became more calm, and the dejection of her soul subsided into a
fixed

fixed gravity. Two more letters were received by Mrs. Goodwin, of which there was not the least notice taken to Miss Williams; these were laid by unopened, and Trueman became in a manner forgot by all but his mistress, who still sighed in secret, though in public she dissembled her grief.

C H A P. XIV.

Miss Williams sees Mr. Trueman by accident, receives a letter from him, and hears an account of his affairs. She is convinced of his innocence: but while her mind is filled with the tenderest pity, he hastes out of the reach of her compassion.

MR. SYMONDS's legacy, and the strong presumption that the lady who seemed so fond of her, would give her something handsome, procured her many admirers; but she still felt too much pain from her former engagement, precipitately to rush on a new one: the confidence she once had in Trueman, who, as she thought, had so cruelly betrayed her, rendered her suspicious of the designs of all other men, and gave a cast of ill-nature to her whole behaviour, that made her be distinguished by those that were unacquainted with the fatal disappointment that had soured one of the sweetest tempers in the world, by the name of the Handsome Prude. However, her thoughtful turn gave her many opportunities of improvement, that she would have lost for want of attention, had her days run calmly on without disquiet: when she found herself unfit for company, she sought consolation from reading, and the seriousness of her mind led her to chuse such authors, as were best suited to improve her judgment, and correct her heart. Another employment that gave her a noble pleasure, was her being appointed the distributor of several private charities, which Mrs. Goodwin bestowed, without ostentation, on the unfortunate; but these avocations could not root out of her heart the painful remembrance of Trueman.

One day as she was going to see a poor sick creature, that Mrs. Goodwin had heard was in great want, she beheld her lover alight at the door of a tavern. He was in a genteel riding dress; but the dejection that overspread his features, let her see that his change of fortune had not exempted him from trouble. The house she was going to was exactly over against the back-door of that she had seen him enter. She ascended the stair-case as well as her trembling legs would give her leave, rejoicing that she had not been seen by Trueman; but on her casting her eyes out of the window, she saw him writing full in her view. In spite of her anger, she could not keep herself from pitying the concern with which he seemed agitated: he wrote a few minutes, then tore what he had written, and sat some time in the most pensive manner without motion, then again applied to his paper. At last she saw him give a letter to a waiter, after which, he walked hastily about the room in great disorder. Miss Williams could not help fancying herself concerned in an epistle that had been penned with so much apparent emotion; she therefore hurried home, resolving if it came to her, to open it: but what were her sensations of tenderness and pity, when she found it contained the following lines?

‘ Madam,
 ‘ **Y**OUR coldness and contempt have imbittered
 ‘ all my enjoyments; but I shall trouble you
 ‘ with no more complaints. Could I have believed the
 ‘ lovely Peggy would have acted thus cruelly, I should
 ‘ not have been at the pains of vindicating my right to
 ‘ what, I now find, is incapable of consoling me for
 ‘ her loss. In the possession of more than I ever
 ‘ wished for, I am unhappy; greatly unhappy. While
 ‘ I believed myself the object of your love, false ac-
 ‘ cusations, the most shocking mortifications, the hor-
 ‘ rors of a jail itself, could not make me, while in the
 ‘ just exercise of my reason, half so miserable as I am
 ‘ this moment, though surrounded with the advantages
 ‘ of fortune. I am intirely ignorant of what I have
 ‘ done

' done to deserve your hatred : but as I am fully con-
 ' vinced that fond complainings can have no power
 ' over a heart become indifferent, this is the last trou-
 ' ble I shall ever give you. It is the constant wish of
 ' my soul, that you may enjoy happiness. Oh how
 ' extatic would have been my bliss, if I had been de-
 ' stined to bestow it on you ! but I correct myself ; I
 ' dare not trust my heart with the inchanting prospect,
 ' lest reflecting on the tormenting contrast should drive
 ' me to madness. The perturbations of my mind have
 ' had such an effect on my body, that I have strong
 ' hopes that my uneasiness will soon be at an end ; but
 ' as I have no right to throw away my life, however
 ' burdensome it is become, I go to try if change of
 ' place can have any effect on a wounded mind. This
 ' night I leave England, perhaps for ever ; but what
 ' is that ? I leave you, you whose presence would have
 ' made the most desert wild my home. How shall I
 ' bid you adieu ? unkind as you are, this parting mo-
 ' ment tears my bosom. You'll despise me for this
 ' unmanly softness. No matter : I despise myself :
 ' yet could not leave you without venting my griefs.
 ' That ten thousand blessings may attend you, will be
 ' the earnest desire of my heart, while life is continued
 ' to.

' The unhappy

' JOSHUA TRUEMAN.'

Peggy, in the perusal of this pathetic epistle, was
 interrupted by many bursts of passion, and the recol-
 lection of the various agitations Trueman discovered
 while writing it, added force to every sentence. In
 spite of all her prejudices, she now believed him in-
 nocent. She saw candour and truth in every line.
 Mrs. Goodwin happened to be out, and therefore
 could give her no consolation or advice : her fondness
 would have sent her immediately to the place where
 she last beheld him ; but prudence contradicted this
 step : she waited her friend's return with the greatest
 impatience, but often forgot her and all the world,

while

while she again ran over her letter : every time she read it, she was more and more assured, that it was dictated from the heart rather than the head ; as there was a wild incoherence ran through it, a promise of no more complainings, when the very next lines were filled with nothing else.

Mrs. Goodwin as soon as she came home went directly to Peggy's room, where she found her weeping with the letter still in her hand. When she, pulling out a paper from her pocket, said, ' What, always in tears ? I have got something here that will dry them up, if any thing can, poor Trueman has been cruelly wronged by our suspicions.' ' Oh madam,' she returned with streaming eyes, ' and I have got that here, that will make me weep for ever !' Passion choaked her words, and sobs were all she was able to utter. The tender heart of Mrs. Goodwin was sensibly touched to see her in this condition. She held a bottle to her nose, cut the lace of her stays, and did all in her power to prevent her fainting ; at last Peggy was enough recollected to see what Mrs. Goodwin had to shew her. It was a paragraph in a letter to the person of whom that lady had made some enquiries in relation to Trueman ; as she had seemed a good deal concerned at the news of his being married, and had dropped some hints of his being engaged before he became possessed of an estate, the gentleman had mentioned this in a letter to a relation who still lived in the same town, and was Trueman's tenant. This person was exasperated against his new landlord, on account of a dispute concerning a lease that was left unsigned at the death of the old man, which, as it was an advantageous bargain to the tenant, and he was offered an advanced rent by another, he refused to agree to, though he had many proofs that it was the sickness and death of his predecessor, that prevented the engagement being completed. From this man Mr. le Brun's friend received a letter, which among other affairs contained the following account of Trueman.

' Here has been the devil to pay since I wrote to you last : You know old Greenfield ; but if I am not
' mistaken

‘ mistaken, you was here when he died, and left a
 ‘ young man, his nephew, all he had scraped toge-
 ‘ ther. I have heard the old man, fifteen or twenty
 ‘ years ago talk of this youth, who was then an in-
 ‘ fant, as the wonder of his age. I and our town’s-
 ‘ folks expected from such early promises to see a cle-
 ‘ ver fellow; but when he came to take possession:
 ‘ the Lord help me! he was a meer clown, had no
 ‘ more manners than a hog, and was as proud as Lu-
 ‘ cifer; but he had not been here above a fortnight,
 ‘ in which time he refused to sign an agreement that
 ‘ was almost finished betwixt me and the old farmer,
 ‘ and had given himself a great many unbecoming airs,
 ‘ before he was routed out of his new estate, by the
 ‘ true heir, he being, it seems, only a counterfeit. If
 ‘ it had not been that we are in the Bible commanded
 ‘ to love our enemies, I should have been pleased to
 ‘ see, how like a hanged dog he looked, when he was
 ‘ turned out of possession.

‘ It is talked, that this wretch is brother to my pre-
 ‘ sent landlord; but he is no more like him, than I am
 ‘ like an angel. You can’t imagine, how obliging
 ‘ and affable the present possessor is: but we are all
 ‘ in vast concern, for the young man seems as if he
 ‘ would not live long to enjoy his uncle’s fortune.
 ‘ The wise old women say he is in love. I heartily
 ‘ wish he may do well: for I think verily I’ll leave my
 ‘ old house, of which I am so fond, if he dies, and
 ‘ t’other brute of a fellow should come here again,
 ‘ which, I suppose will be the case, if he is indeed his
 ‘ brother.’

Peggy had no sooner run over that part of the coun-
 tryman’s letter which concerned Trueman, than she
 burst into a fresh flood of tears, and sobbed out, ‘ If
 ‘ he is indeed innocent, what have I to answer for? I
 ‘ have seen him, madam, and the remembrance of his
 ‘ looks pierce my soul.’ — ‘ Seen him,’ interrupted
 Mrs. Goodwin, ‘ why was your meeting kept a secret
 ‘ from me? I thought Peggy, I deserved your confi-
 ‘ dence.’ ‘ O, Madam!’ she answered, ‘ I deserve
 ‘ your pity not your anger. I saw him writing this
 ‘ letter

• letter in which he takes leave of me for ever. If he
 • dies, there will not be a wretch more miserable
 • than me; for I must look on myself as his murderer!
 • What an unthankful return for the most disinterested
 • affection!’

Mrs. Goodwin eagerly cast her eyes over the paper, and without saying any thing to Peggy, except enquiring where it was she had seen Trueman, hurried out of the room, to give orders to a servant to go to the tavern, and to desire the gentleman to step to her house.

She at first determined not to let Peggy know that she had sent for him; but for fear his sudden appearance might hurt her health, as the present lowness of her spirits made her but ill able to bear any sudden emotion, she acquainted her with the message she had given her servant. The poor dejected Peggy anticipated her misfortune before the footman’s return, and shewed no extraordinary extasy of grief, when he brought word that Mr. Trueman set out in a post chaise, half an hour before he got to the house. The man, according to the command of his lady, asked the people belonging to the tavern, if they knew to what place the gentleman was going; but they were intirely ignorant of all concerning him. Let every reader who has a heart capable of sensibility, reflect what must be the condition of the poor forlorn disconsolate Miss Williams. She had fancied, while she thought her lover untrue, her distress could admit of no increase; but she now felt the falsity of this persuasion; her griefs were then all her own, but now she pictured in her imagination, the dear youth believing her false, and made miserable by that belief. She represented him to her mind as incapable of enjoying the bounty of providence, sinking to the grave, and withering in the bloom of youth, through her unkindness. She now would have given the world, had she been possessed of it, to have had him, what she once dreaded, really unfaithful and happy. She often forgot herself, while she lamented his situation; but when a chain of thoughts led her to consider him, as recovered, and
 made.

made happy by the affection of another woman, the tears of softness flowed on her own account, and she regretted her unhappy credulity, that had, as she imagined, cast her far from the hopes of ever being reconciled to him she loved with the most passionate fondness; however, her friend Mrs. Goodwin gave her better prospects; she often tried to disperse the gloom which sat on her features, by all the arts of persuasion and tenderness, she even suggested to her the high probability there was, that they should find out the place of her lover's retreat, and promised, if that was the case, she would take on herself the task of informing him of the true state of her heart, and the motives of her seeming coolness. Indeed, the kindness of this lady enabled her to bear up, under the weight of her distresses, with some composure and decency.

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
J O S H U A T R U E M A N .
B O O K III.
C H A P. I.

Contains two letters wrote by the same hand, though
in a very different strain.

TWO or three days after that in which Peggy had seen Trueman, she received a letter from Buckinghamshire, in answer to one she had sent the friendly Miss Jenny ; it began with an air of coldness and constraint, that prepared her for what followed, which was a smart reprehension, for her unworthy treatment of a deserving man, who loved her with the greatest tenderness : after which the lady added :

‘ If I did not think it would minister food to your
‘ vanity, I would tell you ; his life is like to pay the for-
‘ feit of his unhappy love. You little know the charms
‘ of reciprocal tenderness, since you can, for the gra-
‘ tification of a silly pride, throw away a virtuous
‘ heart. Unthinking as you are, if you have any
‘ feeling, the generosity of this ill-treated lover, will
‘ awake some remains of tenderness and pity, when
‘ you shall be told, that he has left in my hands a will,
‘ that constitutes you heir to almost all he has in his
‘ power to dispose of. I will own, for it is the virtu-
‘ ous

'ous only I wish to be my friends, that I opposed this
 'filly donation, with all the rhetoric I was mistress of;
 'but he, blinded with love, became your advocate,
 'and alleged, in your vindication, that the affections
 'of the heart were not in our own power; but all his
 'pleadings served only to convince me, of the value
 'of what you are weak enough to despise. O Peggy!
 'had I, like you, the power of making myself happy,
 'I would not heap up remorse, instead of self-appro-
 'bation. This will certainly be your case, if True-
 'man dies without being reconciled to you, even tho'
 'his death could make you mistress of millions. Gold
 'is a poor relief for an aching heart or a wounded
 'conscience: that you will receive, if you are not lost
 'to a sense of humanity, must endear the memory of
 'the generous youth, and raise a shameful and painful
 'sense of your own levity and ingratitude. I have
 'but little reason to believe, that any thing I can say,
 'will be of weight with a mind, that has thrown off
 'its tenderness for a man of merit and virtue, or I
 'would advise you, if possible, to make your peace
 'with Trueman before it is too late. He droops, he
 'pines in secret, yet is ashamed to own his weakness.
 'If you are really become indifferent to his person, be
 'just and tell him so, for surely he has a right to your
 'friendship and esteem at least: a contemptuous si-
 'lence is an ill return for repeated obligations. He
 'talks of going out of the kingdom for the recovery
 'of his health; but while he carries his inbred wound
 'in his bosom, change of place or air can do him little
 'good. I have wrote you a long letter, in a very dif-
 'ferent strain from what I ever expected you would
 'have deserved; however return to your self, return
 'to your senses, and consult your own happiness, and
 'you may still count among the number of your
 'friends

' JANE HASLEDOWN.'

In the letter Peggy had sent to Miss Jenny before
 she received this, she had mentioned Mr. Symonds's
 legacy

legacy; but the lady was too angry to congratulate her on her good fortune. This omission did not pass unnoticed by Miss Williams, which joined to the warmth with which the lady expressed herself in regard to Trueman, made her too angry to be very forward in her own vindication. She thought, and perhaps justly, that those who have conferred favours, should be extremely cautious how they became monitors, lest advice should look like upbraidings for past obligations. She was even so nettled at her friend's heat, as to express herself with some asperity to Mrs. Goodwin; but the advice of this prudent woman soon cooled her resentment. She told her, though she was innocent of any designed contempt of Trueman, and had believed, that she had treated him no worse than he deserved, Miss Jenny, who was unacquainted with her motives, and the intelligence she had received, must think her actuated by a spirit of coquetry, that well deserved the severity with which she wrote: 'be-
'fides,' she added, 'the motive ought always to justify the action: her anger to you arises from her regard to Trueman; and believe me, my dear, you will want one of the necessary qualifications of a good wife, if good will to the man who is your husband, will not atone, in your esteem, for some little disrespect shewn to yourself in the expression of it.'

Thus was every occasion seized by Mrs. Goodwin, to convey some useful hint to the mind of Peggy, that might ensure her future peace and happiness.

As her thoughts turned on Trueman, her anger at Miss Jenny died away. She saw the justness of Mrs. Goodwin's remark, and felt a lively gratitude, in the place of the uneasy sensations that are inspired, when our self-love is mortified, and we fancy our pride has received an affront.

In her answer she vindicated her past conduct, from the many reasons she had to believe Trueman false, and pictured her own despair in such lively colours, that her friend did not delay one post before she sent her the following reply.

' Dear

‘ Dear Peggy,

‘ **M**Y heart feels your distress. I am ashamed of
‘ my last letter : for I ought to have made my-
‘ self acquainted with the reason of your actions, before
‘ I had set myself to condemn them. I sincerely ask
‘ your pardon for the many bitter things my pity for
‘ poor Trueman made me write. How gladly would I
‘ make you compensation for my unmannerly resentment,
‘ by informing you how you may recover the fugitive ;
‘ but alas ! this is not in my power ; for though
‘ he has left me in some measure the manager of his fortune,
‘ he has kept from me, and I believe, from all the
‘ world, the place of his retreat. I looked on his talk
‘ of travelling, rather as a thing at a distance, than
‘ a resolution to be put in immediate execution ; it
‘ was this belief, that made me write so severely, in
‘ hopes of bringing on a reconciliation ; for I thought
‘ he would in all probability, endeavour to see you
‘ while he was in London. I am persuaded, if you
‘ had met, his looks would have convinced you of
‘ his truth. I have still hopes, that his youth, and
‘ a good natural constitution, will enable him to
‘ bear up under the present uneasiness of his mind.
‘ I am commissioned by him to send him bills :
‘ but am ordered to direct them to a banker in Paris.
‘ I fancy you might by this conveyance get a line or
‘ two to his sight. I know the decorums a young
‘ woman ought to observe in so nice a circumstance :
‘ but surely the life and health of a worthy man should
‘ not be sacrificed to forms : However, consult your
‘ friend Mrs. Goodwin ; for alas ! my own fatal imprudence
‘ should have made me silent in respect to the conduct of others :
‘ but if I did not love you, I should not be so forward to give you advice.

‘ For my own part, my hopes of happiness in this
‘ world, grow fainter every day : the father of my
‘ dear Jenny seems totally depraved ; he has lately debauched
‘ the daughter of a poor labourer, and when he offered the father
‘ of the girl a piece of money to hush up the affair, the man
‘ with scorn rejected his proposal

propofal, and muttered vengeance againſt him. This poor wretch the hand of power has thrown into a jail. O Peggy ! my heart is in the utmoſt terror, for the confequences of theſe iniquitous proceedings. I have privately relieved the poor girl, and enabled her to ſuccour her father : my mind is in ſtrange perplexity, left while I am exerciſing the duties of humanity, I ſhould by ſome inadvertent diſcovery draw on myſelf the immoveable hatred of the man I ſtill love with the greateſt tenderneſs. I know the impetuofity of his temper, and that he can't bear contradiction ; I therefore made him no remonſtrances, though I have lately been in company, when he has been preſent. Shall I tell you, Peggy, my weakneſs ? I was pleaſed to find him embarrassed at ſeeing me. A ſort of conſcious ſhame ſhined on his cheek ; he remained ſome time ſilent and confuſed, and while I was in company, kept within the ſtrictest rules of decency and good manners, tho' the whole pariſh complains of his converſation's being as debauched as his actions. Had I ſtill the power of reclaiming him, how bleſt would be my ſituation ! but alas ! I fear that nothing but ſome unheard-of calamity can work a change in a heart ſo inured to vice.

' Some time ago our vicar paid him a viſit, and among other diſcourſe, expreſſed his wonder, that a man of his eſtate did not marry. He answered with a ſigh, and an uncommon gravity of look, ſo he would, if he could get one lady in the mind ; but he was ſuch a ſad fellow, and ſhe ſo exceeding good, that he had not the courage to aſk her. Shall I confeſs, that when the good dame Hoſkins told me of this converſation, my heart for the firſt time, felt a kind of jealousy ; for though an union with him in his preſent immoral way of thinking would be intolerable miſery, I find I can't bear calmly but to think of his giving his eſteem to another. It was this thought that led me to try, if I was quite forgot. My Jenny, who is grown prodigiouſly, and has juſt entered her tenth year, was with me : he took a great deal of notice of the child ; but I muſt not let her

I

appear

‘ appear in public, for I was more than once put to the
 ‘ blush by some in the company observing, the great
 ‘ likeness there was between her and the ‘squire. I
 ‘ am sure you would pity me, could I make you sensi-
 ‘ ble of the tender softnings of my mind, while I be-
 ‘ held this dear child in her father’s embrace, and the
 ‘ pang of shame I felt, when I reflected, that I durst not
 ‘ give way to the maternal fondness that at that instant
 ‘ overflowed my heart, and made me long to confess
 ‘ the near relation I stood in to the little chatterer ; but
 ‘ you that are not conscious of such weakness as mine,
 ‘ can have no idea what it is to blush for being the pa-
 ‘ rent of a child, that would be the glory and boast of
 ‘ an innocent mother. Whether he has any suspicion
 ‘ that the girl is mine, I know not ; but he has asked
 ‘ dame Hoskins many questions about her, and appears
 ‘ to have an extraordinary affection for her, while the
 ‘ little creature on her side is for ever talking of the
 ‘ handsome gentleman that gave her sweetmeats, and
 ‘ told her, he should not wish a prettier girl for his
 ‘ daughter. Excuse, dear Peggy, this idle tittle tattle.
 ‘ I have talked a long while of myself : but I will not
 ‘ now forget to rejoice with you in your good fortune.
 ‘ I heartily wish you joy of your legacy ; but while I
 ‘ believed you unfaithful to Trueman, I was too much
 ‘ vexed to think of any thing else ; forgive the omission,
 ‘ and believe me to be

‘ Your sincere and affectionate friend,

‘ JANE HASLEDOWN.’

As Miss Jenny had, in this letter, opened her
 heart, and acknowledged all its weaknesses, Peggy
 thought she had no right to shew it to Mrs. Good-
 win ; for though that lady had, by repeated favours,
 merited an unreserved confidence, with respect to
 whatever concerned herself, she did not think she was
 at liberty to trust from her own bosom, the secrets of
 her friends, especially if they were of importance : she
 therefore only mentioned her advising her to write to
 Trueman.

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Trueman. This Mrs. Goodwin opposed ; but at the same time told Peggy, who seemed a little vexed at her scruples, that she would herself make him acquainted with the regard she still felt for him, if she would get from her friend the address of the banker, to whom Trueman's bills were to be directed.

This for the present gave the heart of Peggy ease, and she soon returned an answer to her friend's letter, in which she desired her to send her the direction. She waited two or three posts for a reply, and when her patience was worn out, she wrote again with some importunity ; but it was still the same : for poor Miss Jenny was unable to send her any. The anxiety of Peggy's mind was so great, that the benevolent Mrs. Goodwin resolved to take a journey into Buckinghamshire to give her relief.

C H A P. II.

Mrs. Goodwin and Peggy take a journey into Buckinghamshire, in order to learn news of Trueman from Miss Jenny, whom they find in a very different situation from what they had reason to expect.

MRS. Goodwin and Peggy set out in a chariot and six, and in one day arrived at the village where the friendly widow Hoskins and her supposed niece dwelt. On their going to the cottage where they lived, they found it shut up, without any sign of an inhabitant. They enquired for them in the neighbourhood ; but the poor people could give them little intelligence, since all they knew was, that the young woman was wounded in an adjacent field, and had been carried to the Grove, which was the name given to the squire's seat, and that she was followed thither by the widow Hoskins and the little girl.

Mrs. Goodwin, as she knew very little of Miss Jenny, except her being possessed of a genteel fortune, was at a loss how to act. She could not imagine it at all proper for a woman of reputation, to suffer herself to be carried

to the house of a notorious libertine, for that was the character she had heard Peggy give of this gentleman; or, if any accident had made her incapable of preventing her being carried thither, she thought her aunt should have brought her back, rather than have followed her herself.

Peggy, who had the strongest confidence in Miss Jenny's prudence, notwithstanding she had been made the confident of her former weakness, endeavoured to remove from Mrs. Goodwin's mind all suspicions injurious to the virtue of her friend; but she found some difficulty to persuade her to pay a visit to the 'squire, in order to learn the truth of her situation; however, she at length prevailed. They enquired for the good dame Hoskins, and was by her introduced to Miss Jenny, whom they found in bed, the 'squire sitting by her, with the little girl between his knees. On all their countenances there were the traces of some great emotion, and they seemed to have been in tears.

The gentleman retired on the entrance of company, and as the lady in bed was too weak to talk, they were told by the old woman, that this was the first day her niece had been able to converse at all; but as soon as she had mentioned the name of Williams, she had given orders for them to be brought up, yet she wished, that if possible, they would defer their business till the next day, lest too much attention might be prejudicial to her, and destroy the little hopes they had of her life. 'No, no,' was uttered from the bed in a faint voice, 'while blessed beyond my hopes, I shall be able to comfort others. Let me but recover the effects of my present transport by an hour's recollection, and I will explain to you, Peggy, the mystery of my being found here.'

They now quitted the room, and were entertained by the master of the house in the politest manner. The assiduity he shewed, by sending almost every minute to hear of Miss Jenny's health, greatly increased Mrs. Goodwin's suspicions, and Peggy's esteem. They were again invited to the chamber of the sick lady, who sat up in her bed, supported with pillows: she

was

was extremely pale, and had one side of her head bound up. Peggy ran to her bed-side, and was received with a look of affection and kindness. ‘ You see me, said she, in the house of a man whom you have heard me say, I thought it my duty to shun ; but I was brought hither without my own consent ; yet am so well pleased with my situation now I am here, that no force shall make me leave it : but do not condemn me till you have heard the reason of my altering my conduct.’ She then stopped for a few minutes, and after having recruited her spirits by taking a cordial, went on.

‘ My present weakness will not let me be very circumstantial in what I have to say in my own behalf ; but I depend on your candor and that of your friend, who, I suppose is the worthy lady I have heard you mention with so much gratitude, so will, without further ceremony proceed.

‘ You may remember, in my last letter, I sent you word, that a man was put in prison for threatening the master of this house : the day after I wrote that letter, I was sitting at work in our little cottage, when my Jenny came running in, with terror and affright in her looks, crying out, as she entered, “ O aunt, they will kill him ; for they have guns in their hands, and are tying him fast ! ” ‘ I eagerly asked the child what she meant ; but was interrupted in my enquiry, by the report of a fowling piece ; the sound directed me to some fields at the back of the village. I ran out at the garden door, and was there in an instant, but not fast enough for my wishes, for I beheld at a distance, him whom you know I loved, notwithstanding all his faults, with the greatest tenderness, in vain endeavouring to defend himself against the united force of three men and a woman.

‘ The noise I made caused one of the men to turn toward me, when he uttered with an oath, “ Secure the woman.” ‘ I heard no more, for a blow I received on the side of my head, in a moment made me senseless.

‘ I remember nothing of what passed, till I found myself in this bed, and a surgeon dressing my head. I would have spoke to Mr. Saunders, the master of this house, who sat close by me, with an appearance of the utmost dejection; but I was forbid to open my lips; he himself joined in the request, entreating me to endeavour to preserve a life that it should be the whole study of his to render happy. I believe this assurance contributed as much as outward applications to my cure. I saw, by the tears of the good dame Hoskins, who at her own desire, attended me, that my life was in extreme danger; but the anxious assiduity that appeared in the looks of the squire, and his scarcely ever being a quarter of an hour from my chamber, sweetned even the horrors of the grave.

‘ I one day, after having endured intolerable pain from the hand of the surgeon, was so extremely low, that all about me thought me dying, when dame Hoskins, careful of the interest of my little Jenny, took this opportunity, while there was a possibility of my confirming what she said, to recount to my repenting lover, the whole transaction of her seeing me going to drown myself, and the secret of my daughter’s birth. He needed no confirmation; in a transport of affection and grief he clasped the child in his arms, and, perhaps for the first time, addressed himself to heaven, begging a blessing on his dear his darling daughter. The noise the child made in weeping aloud, caused me to open my eyes while he was holding her close to his breast: the fond attitude, and the words *child and daughter* shot through my soul, and as it were, infused a new life, I, forgetting my weakness, made an attempt to raise myself in my bed, that I might better behold these dear objects; but my efforts so exhausted my strength, that I sunk on my pillow in a fainting-fit. They now concluded me dead, and by the account I have since received from my careful nurse, the pangs of my lover’s grief exceeded all description. They forced him from my bed-side, nearly as pale and senseless as myself. But just as they were preparing for me the habiliments

‘ of

‘ of death, a sigh informed them that I still breathed.
 ‘ In a few minutes I grew sensible enough to ask for
 ‘ my child and her father ? They appeared ; but what
 ‘ language has power sufficient to express the various
 ‘ agitations that filled my mind, or the wild excess of
 ‘ my joy, when my lover pronounced the tender name
 ‘ of wife, and vowed to renounce his follies for ever,
 ‘ if all-gracious heaven spared my life ?

‘ I find the affecting theme too much for my present
 ‘ quantity of spirits, and can therefore only inform
 ‘ you, that this day, this happy day has joined our
 ‘ hands.’

The widow Hoskins now imposed silence on her
 niece, who, she said, had already talked too much,
 and told them, the blow which the lady fancied she had
 received, on her head, was in reality the entrance of a
 small bullet, that had been with much difficulty ex-
 tracted, the day they believed her dead. Mrs. Good-
 win enquired who was the author of this execrable deed.
 The old woman hesitated a few minutes, before she
 answered ; at last she said, ‘ It came from a hand that
 ‘ little designed it, since it was from ’Squire Saunders
 ‘ himself. The wretches with whom he was contend-
 ‘ ing, she continued, were endeavouring to force him
 ‘ to marry a young woman against his will. He is na-
 ‘ turally furious ; he had about him a pocket pistol,
 ‘ and blinded with rage and passion, he discharged it
 ‘ at a man who was threatening his life ; but with so ill
 ‘ directed an aim, that it struck my dear niece to the
 ‘ ground. This scene of horror, together with the
 ‘ sound of feet that were hastening toward the place,
 ‘ immediately dispersed the men, who ran as fast as
 ‘ possible, for fear of being pursued. No one was
 ‘ present at this accident, but those who durst not ap-
 ‘ pear, as they were themselves obnoxious to the law,
 ‘ for an assault on the ’squire ; she was therefore
 ‘ brought hither, without the least suspicion. I my-
 ‘ self knew not the author of this mischance, till our
 ‘ believing her past all hope, made the ’squire unmind-
 ‘ ful of his own safety. He then, in a wild transport
 ‘ of sorrow, confessed the horrid deed, execrating him-

' self as her murderer. There was, in the whole of
 ' his behaviour, such strong signs of contrition, that I
 ' did not doubt his sincerity. I consoled him by my
 ' advice, as much as possible, and, with much persua-
 ' tion, prevailed on him not to hurt his own reputation,
 ' by a confession that could do my niece no manner of
 ' good, and would infallibly bring shame and disgrace
 ' on his child. This roused his attention. I present-
 ' ed the little creature to him. I found that the soften-
 ' ings of parental affection calmed his rage against
 ' himself; and he consented, as he said, to drag, for
 ' her sake, a wretched life, that must never know a
 ' cheerful moment, if his dear, his lovely Jenny, ex-
 ' pired by his hand. The effects of this moving inter-
 ' view had like to have proved fatal; but we now
 ' have better hopes. The surgeon and doctor both a-
 ' gree, that my dear patient is almost out of danger.
 ' She has told you that she was this morning married;
 ' this ceremony was performed, at the desire of the
 ' squire himself, as he said her returning health would
 ' make it necessary for him to be more from her than
 ' his fondness could bear, if, for the security of her
 ' fame, she was not his wife, as he was considered as
 ' a man of dissolute morals. This tender care has much
 ' increased my esteem for him, and I have the greatest
 ' reason to hope for their mutual happiness.'

Miss Williams sympathized very sincerely in the hap-
 piness of her friend; but her mind was still anxious;
 she longed to make her dear Trueman the subject of
 conversation, yet knew not how to mention him. A
 sort of false shame kept her silent. The lady in bed
 had spent herself in the foregoing detail, and was
 dropped into a slumber, when Mrs. Goodwin, who was
 ever mindful of the dearest interests of those she loved,
 took this opportunity to ask Mrs. Hoskins, what she
 knew concerning Trueman's having been in danger of
 losing his uncle's estate. To which the good old wo-
 man answered, ' His uncle died during his imprison-
 ' ment, and an attorney of the place where the old
 ' farmer had lived, in whose hands the will was de-
 ' posited, not knowing where to direct to young True-
 ' man

‘ man himself, sent word of his client’s death, and an
 ‘ account of the manner of his disposing of his estate to
 ‘ the young man’s father, who believing his son Joshua
 ‘ guilty of what Mr. Symonds had laid to his charge,
 ‘ and in every respect a wild, dissolute, good for no-
 ‘ thing young fellow, he consented to a contrivance of
 ‘ his wife’s, for her son to personate him, and by that
 ‘ means to enter on the possession of a fortune, that
 ‘ would otherwise be soon lost to the family.’

‘ This scheme was discovered to Trueman, by the
 ‘ ostentation of the young fellow who endeavoured to
 ‘ supplant him, he being fool enough to pay for hav-
 ‘ ing his marriage put into the public papers, one of
 ‘ which fell by accident into the hands of Miss Jenny,
 ‘ who mentioned it to Trueman, in order to know if
 ‘ the new-married gentleman was related to him. This
 ‘ would have past off as a piece of intelligence in
 ‘ which he had not the least concern, if my niece had
 ‘ not recollected the name of the countryman who had
 ‘ left the bridegroom the estate, which she no sooner
 ‘ mentioned than Trueman cried out, “ You astonish
 “ me, madam, he was my uncle, my mother’s own
 “ brother. I am sure he had no relation of the name
 “ of Trueman besides me and my father : it must cer-
 “ tainly be a mistake, or some villain has taken on
 “ himself my name, in order to cheat me. I know
 “ no one capable of such baseness, that is enough ac-
 “ quainted with our family, except my artful mother-
 “ in-law has had the address to prevail on my father
 “ to commit such a piece of injustice, in favour of her
 “ own son. I remember, when I was a child, my
 “ uncle came to my father’s, and on his asking for
 “ me, I have since found, that she had the injustice,
 “ to present her boy to him as his nephew, by which
 “ means she deprived me of a trifling present. But
 “ this was not the worst consequence that attended her
 “ deception : for the old man thought me greatly un-
 “ worthy the praises my kind uncle who brought me
 “ up, afterwards, from his fondness, bestowed upon
 “ me. After his death, I lived at my father’s, and
 “ was there told of this pretty piece of art, which
 “ scarce ever entered my head since.”

‘ My niece offered Trueman her purse to enable him
‘ to prosecute his right, if, on enquiry, it should be as
‘ he seemed to suspect. He set out on his journey in-
‘ to Yorkshire immediately on his being released, and
‘ sent us an account of his brother-in-law’s being in
‘ possession. His proving his right might have been at-
‘ tended with some difficulty. But an old woman who
‘ was present at his birth, of her own accord went into
‘ Yorkshire, and so intimidated the impostor, by threat-
‘ ning to swear what she knew of his villainy, and of
‘ Trueman’s right, that he quitted the possession without
‘ force. This woman Trueman rewarded, by appointing
‘ her his house-keeper, and settling on her a small an-
‘ nuity for life; and indeed, the faithful creature well
‘ deserved his bounty, as she once would have given
‘ all her little treasure to relieve him in his distress.’

Peggy then took courage to enquire if they had not heard of Mr. Trueman, since he left England; she was answered, that they had not yet had any letter, but was in daily expectation of one.

When Miss Jenny, whom for the future we must call Mrs. Saunders, after the name of her spouse, awoke, she found herself very much refreshed, and even entered into conversation with cheerfulness. Mrs. Goodwin now asked the name of the person to whom the lady was to address those letters she was to send to Trueman, and found him to be a gentleman of whom she had some knowledge. She now believed she had it in her power to give ease to the anxious heart of poor Miss Peggy, as she thought herself certain of gaining intelligence of the rout of her wandering lover. They, with much importunity, were prevailed on to stay two days with Mrs. Saunders, in which time the good sense of the new married lady, and the affability and ease of her behaviour, so endeared her to Mrs. Goodwin, that they commenced a friendship that lasted as long as their lives. Miss Williams reaped inconceivable benefit from this intimacy, since they joined their endeavours to give her every good qualification that they themselves possessed. Mrs. Goodwin had a cast of suspicion in her temper, that would very probably have had some effect on her young pupil, if the open unsuspecting candour

candour of Mrs. Saunders had not prevented it. Both these ladies had loved, and both had been deceived; but as Mrs. Goodwin had no reproaches to make herself, she expressed her anger against the falsehood of men, with much more bitterness than Mrs. Saunders had done, even in the height of her resentment. This warmth occasioned many disputes between the two ladies, which was carried on by letters after they separated. They differed too in their dispositions. The French woman, as she was called, though she was born in England, but a little of the prude, and Mrs. Saunders, till the ballast of misfortunes made her steady, had a small spice of the coquet: but this opposition of temper was so far from being any hindrance to their friendship, that it was often the cause of many agreeable sallies from the one, and of grave, though good humoured remonstrances from the other, that gave them both an opportunity of pleasing themselves, by an opposition that diversified their entertainment, and set their different talents in the fairest point of light: but I forget that my reader is impatient to learn news of poor Trueman.

C H A P III.

Contains two letters from Mr. Trueman.

JUST before the visitors were to set out for London, Peggy's heart was put in a violent palpitation by a servant delivering a letter to Mrs. Hoskins, who after a consultation with Mr. Saunders delivered it to her niece, for so she was permitted to call her.

The lady broke the seal, and casting her eyes to the bottom, said with a smile, to Miss Williams and Mrs. Goodwin, 'If you could have divined the receipt of this, I imagine I should not have had so much difficulty to have prevailed on you to have done your duty, in comforting the sick:' and then added, looking at Peggy, 'for all your impatience, madam, I shall read my letter to myself, before I communicate the contents, lest there should be any thing in it that
' would

‘ would increase your vanity, which, if I judge of you
 ‘ by myself, when I was at your age, is raised to a
 ‘ sufficient pitch by the undissembled affection of a
 ‘ man of Mr. Trueman’s merit.’

To this they returned no answer, as Mrs. Saunders applied herself immediately to running over her epistle, which, when she had finished, she put into the hands of Mrs. Goodwin, while Peggy sat in a thoughtful silence, not daring to lift her eyes from the floor, lest they should betray the tender agitations of her soul.

During this affecting suspense, Mrs. Saunders had another letter to read, in which they thought they had no interest, they therefore retired to look over that she had already given Mrs. Goodwin. They found it very short, containing only what follows :

‘ MADAM,

‘ **A**S I believe you kindly interest yourself in what
 ‘ concerns me, I do myself the honour to in-
 ‘ form you that the health of my body seems in a fair
 ‘ way of being re-established, and my mind is at last
 ‘ filled with a calm resignation to the disposal of pro-
 ‘ vidence. I even look on the blessings I once hoped
 ‘ to enjoy as withheld from me for wise reasons. Had
 ‘ the dear creature, who I have resolved no more to
 ‘ name, been what I wished, I should perhaps have
 ‘ doated too much on this world, and its enjoyments,
 ‘ to have thought on another; but this is a subject
 ‘ I must leave, or I shall forget all my boasted philoso-
 ‘ phy, and feel, keenly feel, that I am still a lover. No-
 ‘ thing but my being a christian, a protestant, and as
 ‘ such not daring to make vows that I am not sure, in
 ‘ this state of human frailty and irresolution, I shall be
 ‘ able to keep, hinders me from being a professed re-
 ‘ cluse, and bidding a final adieu to the world, and all
 ‘ its empty vanities. I wished, ardently wished but
 ‘ for the power of rendering one dear object happy,
 ‘ and when I thought heaven had granted my wish,
 ‘ the fleeting good escaped me, and she herself was the
 ‘ cause of my sharpest distress. What is poverty and
 ‘ contempt to the pangs of disappointed love! I would,
 ‘ while

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‘ while writing to you, correct the inconsistency of my
‘ temper ; but I find it impossible. When I began, I
‘ thought to have proved the calmness of my mind,
‘ but alas ! I only shew its perturbations. All that
‘ would delight the eye of a stranger by its grandeur
‘ and novelty, is to me barely sufficient to divert my
‘ attention from dwelling on such considerations as
‘ would hinder the effect of all medicine. My mind is
‘ too ill at ease, to enter into particular descriptions.
‘ I have made an acquaintance with a young English
‘ gentleman ; he has with him a sister, who very much
‘ resembles my once dear Peggy. At this gentleman’s
‘ lodgings I spend most of my time ; but am in some fear
‘ that an accident which I can’t relate, without an
‘ appearance of vanity, will deprive me this consolation.
‘ I am going with him to take a journey of
‘ pleasure ; I have no present occasion for cash, so shall
‘ not appoint you where to send my bills till my return
‘ to Paris. The banker to whose care I begged you
‘ to send your letters is just dead.

‘ Madam, I am,

‘ With the greatest respect and gratitude,

‘ Your most humble servant,

‘ JOSHUA TRUEMAN.’

Miss Williams’s hopes of letting Trueman know the
real sentiments of her heart, were now quashed : the
gentleman’s sister too, gave her mind uneasy reflections.
‘ He believes me false,’ says she to Mrs. Goodwin ;
‘ what then should hinder him from making himself
‘ happy with another, who will, in his esteem, do
‘ more justice to his merit ? To what a condition
‘ should I be reduced, if the lady’s likeness to me
‘ should have engaged his affection ? She may be pos-
‘ sessed of charms that I have no claim to, and make
‘ him from a friend, become a lover. What can he
‘ mean, by his not caring to explain himself about
‘ what he fears will make him lose the friendship of
‘ his companion ?’

Mrs.

Mrs. Goodwin smiled at Peggy's fears, and told her, she gave one proof of love, for she was horridly jealous. 'Jealous, madam,' she replied, blushing, 'indeed I am not; for I think I am certain Mr. Trueman will have no more thoughts of me; and I am sure it is no business of mine what other woman he thinks of.' 'Yet,' returned Mrs. Goodwin, 'for all this forced carelessness, you would give half your little fortune, to be sure this same English lady could make no impression on his heart.' I confess, madam,' she replied, 'that I am weak and silly enough to be uneasy; but I will strive to forget that such a man lives, as I see plainly, he is in a fair way of thrusting me for ever from his memory.'

As she spoke this, in spite of her endeavours to the contrary, her eyes grew moist, which the humane Mrs. Goodwin perceiving, applied herself to give her comfort, 'If,' said she, 'there was any danger of Trueman's becoming more sensible than you would wish him, to this lady's attractions, how could what he does not care to relate, from its rendering him liable to be charged with vanity, be any reason for him to break with his friend. It appears to me, that there is some reason for you to suspect, that the young lady is like you, in more respects than one, and that she has more regard for Mr. Trueman than he is ever likely to return.' 'If that be the case,' said Miss Williams, 'I pity her; but I am afraid it is myself that is the only object worthy of compassion.'

They were here interrupted by Mrs. Hoskins, who entered the room, and invited them to Mrs. Saunders's chamber. That lady, as soon as she saw Peggy, asked her if she was not in mortal apprehension for the fidelity of Trueman. 'I can tell you,' said she, 'he is in a ticklish situation; a fair lady like an old mistress, is a dangerous temptation to constancy.' 'Very possibly, madam,' Peggy replied coldly, 'Mr. Trueman may be in the situation he wishes; for I think a man can't be dragged to keep company with a woman against his will. I should take it kind if you would not tease me about him.'

As this was uttered a little peevishly, Mrs. Saunders punished her for her ill-humour, by replying, since the name of Trueman was become disagreeable, she would not give her the trouble of reading any more of his epistles, 'though,' she added with a smile, 'I have one in my hand that is worth reading.' Peggy felt the most restless curiosity to see this second letter; but so great was her timidity, that she had not the courage to ask for it, however, Mrs. Saunders pitying the pain that was visible in her countenance, held it towards her, on which she took it, and read to herself as follows:

'YOU will be surprized, madam, at receiving another letter from me, so soon after my last. In that I wrote three days ago, I told you, I stood in no need of cash; but I was the same night robbed of all my ready money by a young man whom I took out of charity. I wish you would be expeditious in sending me a supply; for I must, till I hear from England, be beholden to the purse of a friend, the gentleman I mentioned in my last. He has hitherto served me with the greatest readiness; but as he has made me some offers in regard to his sister, that my heart will not suffer me to accept, I imagine we shall not long be friends. Obligations in such a situation are painful to the mind. The man that robbed me was taken with the greatest part of my cash about him; but I don't find I am likely to have it again, as I can't swear to every individual piece, and the fellow denies the fact. In searching him there was found in his pocket a small picture of a lady; this I would have purchased, if the villain had left it in my power. I blush to tell you the reason, but I know you will suspect it, I'll therefore confess, that it might pass for one drawn for Miss Williams, if the drapery did not shew, that it was painted some years before she was born. I viewed it with great attention, and as I looked at it, an involuntary sigh escaped me. My friend and his sister were present, and the lady, to my great mortification, purchased
' it

' it of the man, who refused to tell how he came by
 ' it ; but the next morning sent it to me inclosed in a
 ' letter, which has increased my repugnancy against
 ' receiving any further obligations from her brother.
 ' In this letter she conjured me to tell her, if the lady
 ' whom it resembles is living, and is still so happy as
 ' to possess my heart. In my answer, I thanked her
 ' for my present, and owned my weakness for an un-
 ' grateful woman. The next time I saw her, which
 ' was a few hours after, she appeared in some confu-
 ' sion, and her brother has since behaved with great
 ' coolness, making me no more offers of assistance,
 ' though he knows my necessity. This generous wo-
 ' man, since my declaration of loving another, keeps
 ' herself out of my sight ; but has, though dependant
 ' on her brother, sent me a note of fifty pounds, in
 ' the wrapper, of which, she begs me to put myself as
 ' little as possible in her brother's power. It is certain
 ' I can love none but the ungrateful Peggy, therefore
 ' I am in the greatest difficulty as to my behaviour to
 ' this agreeable woman ; for though I have not the
 ' least propensity to a softness for her person, I feel a
 ' good deal of disappointment at losing her company.
 ' She has a delicacy of thinking, that renders her
 ' esteem flattering to my self-love ; yet honesty and
 ' honour forbid, that I should endeavour to preserve it
 ' at the expence of truth. I wish for the means of
 ' shewing my gratitude to her, and will for fear of
 ' making her unhappy, deny myself the pleasure of
 ' her friendship. I purpose, as soon as I receive re-
 ' mittances from you, to discharge my debts, and set
 ' out for Dover. While disappointed in my dearest
 ' hopes, I have little prospect of happiness from
 ' change of place ; the whole earth to me is a melan-
 ' choly void. But whither am I rambling ? I am a-
 ' shamed of these unmanly complaints, and will no
 ' more indulge them, lest you should be ashamed, in
 ' your turn, of permitting me to subscribe myself,

' Your most humble servant,

' JOSHUA TRUEMAN.

' P. S.

‘P. S. Lost in the too interesting subject, I had like
 ‘to have forgot to inform you where to direct my
 ‘bills. They may be sent to the place we had a-
 ‘greed on before I left England, as the banker is
 ‘succeeded in his business by his son.’

Miss Williams returned the letter as soon as she had read it to Mrs. Saunders, who told her with a smile, that if she would write to Mr. Trueman, she would take care of her letter, and send it along with his bills. She blushed, and casting a look at Mrs. Goodwin, replied fearfully, she did not know whether it would become her to write: ‘He seems,’ she continued, ‘to have given his esteem to the lady he praises so much, and a hundred to one but his love will follow it. I should be loth to be made the subject of their ridicule.’ Mrs. Goodwin answered very gravely, that she thought a friend might, with a better grace, undeceive Mr. Trueman, and make him sensible of the injury he did Peggy, in believing her heart insensible and ungrateful, than she could do it herself. ‘You, madam,’ said she to Mrs. Saunders, ‘whom Mr. Trueman believes his friend, and for whom he has a very high esteem, will best fulfil this task of friendship.’

This the lady very readily promised. They then took their leave, and set out for London with more cheerfulness than they left it. Not but the heart of Miss Peggy was still anxious and uneasy; but she had now hopes that her dear Trueman would at least be happy, though she dreaded the charms of the generous lady, and very sincerely wished, it had been from her purse, that her lover had found his relief.

C H A P. IV.

Mifs Williams fees her whom ſhe thought her mother, in the utmoſt wretchedneſs, and in the laſt agonies, but finds, after her death, that ſhe had no right to that title.

WHILE they were in the country, Peggy's father had been to Mrs. Goodwin's, to ſee his daughter, and to give his thanks to that lady, who had generously procured him a place that brought him in, without much labour, a decent competency, and had the advantage of being a little way from London, a circumſtance that had greatly contributed to the recovery of his health, which was not ſo much impaired through age, as by the uneaſineſs of his mind. His daughter was provided for, and himſelf exempted from all ſolicitude on her account. He longed to make his acknowledgements of gratitude to the kind beſtower of ſo many favours ; but though he had not yet ſeen her, the duties of his employment would not permit him to ſtay till their return.

He was ſeen to enter this houſe, by the woman whom we have hitherto called Peggy's mother: the difference viſible in his dreſs, made this woman believe, that ſome fortunate circumſtance had attended his condition : as for her, ſhe was reduced to the utmoſt wretchedneſs, and was covered with rags and filth. She waited in the ſtreet for his coming out, and accoſted him in terms of ſupplication and complaint, and at the ſame time begged for relief. He, however, rejected her petitions with that diſdain that her wickedneſs deſerved ; but which he ought not, perhaps, to have ſhewn to a woman who had lived with him many years as his wife, and whom he had taught his child to believe was her mother. A ſervant in the family was witneſs to his behaviour, and did not fail to make a report of it to her miſtreſs. The maid had queſtioned the poor ragged creature, and ſhe, exaſperated to the height at being refuſed ſuccour, where ſhe believed ſhe had.

had the best right to expect it, had made her own story good, at the expence of Peggy's father, whom she represented as the worst of villains; and told the servant that he had left his wife, and lived with another woman.

When the girl gave her lady this information, Peggy was not present; but Mrs. Goodwin took the first opportunity to mention to her, what she had heard. She vindicated her father as far as her knowledge would give her leave; and said, that during her infancy, he always appeared a kind husband, and she had never heard her mother make the least complaint. 'If, said she, it was not for this accusation, I should believe it was my wretched mother herself that begged his relief. I have frequently intreated him to forgive her, and restore her to favour; but he seems so peevish and confused whenever I mention her, that I should rather relieve her myself than put him any more out of humour about her. If she is ever seen here again, I should be glad to have her brought to me.' 'No,' answered Mrs. Goodwin, as she seems of so tattling a disposition, that would be the ready way to expose you to the contempt of my servants. I'll see her myself, without letting her know that you are with me; for I entirely approve of your sensibility to the wants of a parent, notwithstanding her having failed in her duty to you. I even think your father carries his resentment too far, if he continues to deny her support, and if I ever see him, I'll take him to task, both about that, and what the woman told Susan: for I have felt too much from the like conduct in a husband, not sincerely to pity those under the same affliction.'

A few days after, Susan told her lady, that the same woman was begging at the door. Peggy could hardly avoid discovering the emotion she felt at her deplorable condition, even before the servant, when stealing a look at her from the window, she was convinced that it was her miserable mother. Mrs. Goodwin ordered her into the hall, where she proposed to ask her some questions. The maids were dispatched out of hearing,

ing, and she was herself near the bottom of the staircase, when the woman just cast her eyes on her, set up a loud cry, and ran out of the door with the utmost precipitation.

Her hasty flight raised suspicions both in the breast of Peggy, and Mrs. Goodwin, that did no great honour to the honesty of the poor creature; but as they missed nothing, they were extremely at a loss to conjecture what could be the woman's motive for running away in such a seeming fright.

About an hour after, a servant being on some occasion sent out, brought intelligence that a person had been just carried to the work-house in convulsions, and was believed to be at the point of death. The high probability that it might be the poor frightened woman, filled the eyes of Peggy with tears, and no fear of mortification to herself, could now restrain her from going to see her. She found her suspicions true, the wretched creature had been in strong fits ever since she had left Mrs. Goodwin's, and the people about her were endeavouring to bring her to herself, when Peggy entered the work-house. The affectionate care shewn to a poor woman by a well dressed young lady, could not fail of making an impression on the minds of the observers; particularly a young gentleman who had obliged the officers of the parish to assist the woman, and had himself followed her to the work-house, took notice of her uncommon charity, and applauded with warmth, sentiments so agreeable to his own. His expressions of approbation passed unheeded, as Peggy's mind was too much taken up to attend to them; but there being but little hopes of the sick woman's regaining her senses, he put into Peggy's hand half a guinea, desiring her to accept it in behalf of the poor wretch, as he was afraid that it would not be expended for the use he designed it, if he gave it to the people of the house, and then added, 'The woman has been in great distress; for she told me before she fell into fits, that she has not eat these three days. I followed her hither from a motive of pity; but, dear Miss, the sight of you has awaked that sensation for an object much dearer.

'dearer to me. You so greatly resemble a dearly beloved sister who has been deluded from me by an artful villain, and who, perhaps, is at this instant exposed to the greatest hardships in a strange country, that I can't help wishing for the honour of being better acquainted with you. I find you have a mind capable of feeling the misfortunes of the unhappy. Do me the favour therefore of letting me know where I may wait on you, to give this unhappy wretch some further assistance, if she lives to need it.'

Peggy's first thought led her to return the gentleman's money; but the candour of his behaviour, and the compassion he had shewn to a miserable stranger, made her to wish to know more of him; she therefore very frankly told him where she lived, and he took his leave.

The poor creature was a little come to herself, when a servant came to let Miss Williams know, that Mrs. Goodwin waited tea for her. The sound of her own name, in a place where she believed herself perfectly unknown, caused the sick woman to cast her eyes on those that stood round her, when the first object she beheld was Peggy. 'Are you come too, to upbraid me,' said she, with a voice interrupted with sobs? 'I have suffered severely for my faults. I wanted but the sight of you, added to what I have seen to day, to put an end to a wretched life.' 'I come not to upbraid you,' replied Peggy, weeping; 'but to offer you my duty and tenderest care.' You owe me none,' answered the woman in a violent emotion, 'I would, but can't; it is she to whom you owe it all. I am not'—Here the words died away on her lips, she sunk down on the pillow, and ceased to breathe.

Mrs. Goodwin's message was repeated; but Miss Williams was too strongly affected with what she had seen and heard, to be able to obey it immediately; however, when she had wiped the tears from her eyes, and was a little recollected, she returned home.

The last words of the unhappy Mrs. Williams dwelt strongly on Peggy's mind, and she remembered her father's saying, that her mother was without blame;
'but

' but if I am not her daughter,' said she to herself, ' to
 ' whom am I indebted for my birth? does my mother
 ' still live? my father only can unravel this mystery.
 ' Oh, that it was true, that my benefactress and friend
 ' was in reality this dear relation! but I should justly
 ' expose myself to her anger, if I pretended such an
 ' alliance without proof: had providence prolonged her
 ' life a few minutes, I might have been rid of this per-
 ' plexing uncertainty; but I amuse myself with wild
 ' chimeras. She by some chance has heard of my
 ' obligations, and meant no more than that I owed my
 ' affection and duty to her from whom I received them.'
 Then recurred to her mind the affright the poor woman
 had shewn at the sight of Mrs. Goodwin. She was
 again at a loss what to judge from her behaviour; but
 was determined to keep to herself the embarrassment of
 her mind, and her various conjectures till she could
 receive an answer to a letter, she designed to send her
 father. She waited impatiently the return of the post,
 which brought her only a few lines.

' Dear PEGGY,

' **T**HE woman you say is dead, was neither your mo-
 ' ther nor my wife. Bestow a decent funeral on
 ' her, and let her be forgotten. She has been the cause of
 ' various ills to us both. Suspend your curiosity a short
 ' time, and I will lay before you all my faults and fol-
 ' lies. I wait but the answer of some enquiries I have
 ' made concerning a dear creature, that was in every
 ' thing the reverse of this unworthy woman. Till I
 ' satisfy all your doubts, keep this letter a secret from
 ' Mrs. Goodwin; for I have been informed she has
 ' heard something to my prejudice already. I wish her
 ' esteem on your account more than my own; for
 ' whatever has been my past conduct in other respects,
 ' the happiness of my dear Peggy has always sat near
 ' the heart of

' Her affectionate father,

' JOHN WILLIAMS.'

Peggy's

Peggy's perplexities were rather increased than removed by this letter; but Mrs. Goodwin thought her extraordinary thoughtfulness proceeded from her not hearing from Mr. Trueman, and, in reality, he had no small share in her melancholy. They had been come from Buckinghamshire near a fortnight, yet had not received a line from Mrs. Saunders: but at last they had a letter that involved them in fresh uneasiness.

That lady informed Peggy, that she had sent bills to Trueman, and in her letter to him warmly vindicated her truth and fidelity; but by the paquet in which she expected an answer, she had her own letter returned along with the notes, under a direction, which ordered them to be left with her for Trueman; this, as she had neither seen him, nor heard any thing from him, she said, gave her great concern, lest he should be exposed to hardships for want of cash. The heart of Miss Williams, ever a prey to some new inquietude, felt intolerable anguish, when she reflected that her lover still believed her false; but a few hours gave a new turn to her thoughts, and made her see great reason to think him so. But I must now leave her, in order to follow Trueman.

C H A P. V.

In which Trueman is under great perplexity, occasioned by his giving protection to a fair lady, who tells her story.

ATTER Mr. Trueman had sent that letter to Mrs. Saunders, in which he so earnestly desired her to be speedy in her remittances, not knowing what to do with himself, he went to the public walks, and was there accosted by an English lady, whom he immediately knew to be the humane Miss Symonds, now Mrs. Stewart. As she had heard of the change of his circumstances, she congratulated him upon it, and asked, if he was yet friends with her old school-fellow. He replied, sighing, that, was that the case, nothing should hold him another day in France. The coming up of
Mr.

Mr. Stewart, the lady's spouse, put a stop for the present to all discourse on so tender a subject; but the gentleman, as he found Trueman was known to his wife, invited him to their lodgings. When they were out of observation, she informed Mr. Stewart, who their guest was, and the obliged Trueman returned that gentleman his acknowledgements, for the part he had taken in his distress while he was a wretched prisoner. He found the young lady had told her husband, that she believed him innocent, by Mr. Stewart's treating him with the greatest deference and regard. When they grew intimate, he informed the gentleman of the distress he was in for want for money, and the pain he found in being beholden to a man whom he began to dislike. This quickly produced him a supply, not only for his present exigences, but sufficient to discharge his obligations to the English gentleman and his sister.

He was returned to his own apartment greatly relieved, when he was told that a lady had been to speak with him, who appeared in great agitation. While he was revolving in his mind to whom he could be indebted for this unseasonable visit, a lady in great dishabille was ushered into the room where he sat, by a servant. The moment the man was withdrawn, she with a voice interrupted with weeping, begged his pardon for thus breaking in upon his retirement. He started at hearing the voice of Cleora, the lady who had so kindly obliged him, by presenting him with the picture that resembled his still dear Peggy, and had in so generous a manner relieved his wants: he asked with eagerness what distress was the cause of her tears, and offered her every service in his power, with a warmth that gave her not the least doubt of his sincerity.

' O Sir!' said the distressed Cleora, ' I should ill deserve the succour I hope from your pity, if I any longer imposed on you by false appearances. I am not the sister of the man you take for your friend; but a miserable creature, who has added one to the number of those he has deluded.

' I was once as happy as ease and innocence could make me. Chance threw me in his way, and my inexperience

* experience and youth fell a too easy prey to his vil-
 * lainsy. I had a small fortune in my own hands ; but
 * had great dependance on a rich uncle, who would
 * have forced me to marry a man I disliked ; and to
 * avoid this, I consented to the proposal of giving my
 * hand, contrary to the will of my friends. With him
 * I left London, after having turned all I could into
 * money, which I put into his possession. He treated
 * me at first with tolerable decency. I believed I had
 * no reason to complain of my lot ; but as my cash be-
 * gan to decline, he grew cross and sullen. On my
 * enquiring into the cause of his ill-humour, he at last
 * confessed, that he had no other support than what he
 * gained at the gaming table.

* About this time he became acquainted with you. I
 * was often surpris'd at his alteration of temper, for he
 * assumed now the utmost sweetness of behaviour. I
 * forgot his former unkindness, and told him very sin-
 * cerely, I should be happy with him in any station,
 * while he continued kind and obliging. He answer-
 * ed that it was in my own power to make him always
 * so ; " but then," he continued, " you must forget that
 * " you are my wife." I kept down as well as I could,
 * the rising tear, when he, to my inconceivable horror
 * and astonishment, went on : " If I am not mistaken,
 * " Mr. Trueman is struck with your person ; improve
 * " this liking up to love, and you procure to yourself a
 * " lasting establishment, and rid me of a burthen that in
 * " my present circumstances, I know not how to sup-
 * " port. I will still be your lover and your friend ; but
 * " fortune, damn'd fortune, deprives me of the happi-
 * " nesses of appearing your husband."

* I, looking on him with eyes full of indignation, be-
 * stowed on him every epithet that despair and rage
 * could suggest. He very calmly heard all I could say,
 * and then replied, if I preferred starving to plenty,
 * I was heartily welcome to pursue my choice ; but,
 * for his own part, if I would not second his views,
 * he would hunt singly, and did not fear game. He
 * then left me, saying as he went out, he did not doubt,

• but that a little reflection would make me think and
• act like a reasonable woman.

• I threw myself on my bed in a transport of grief;
• I deplored my own folly in casting off the protection
• and care of all my friends, and throwing myself into
• the arms of a wretch who would prostitute me for
• money. At that time, I had seen you but twice.
• My unworthy husband brought you home with him
• that day to dine with us. He presented me to you as
• his sister. I would have exclaimed against his false-
• hood, and confessed my real situation, if I had not
• been intimidated by his looks. You seemed pleased
• with my conversation, which made him insist, that if
• I would avoid being immediately stripped, and left
• in a strange country to all the miseries and hardships
• of want, I should carry on the deception. I com-
• plied at first, with a design to undeceive you, as soon
• as I could do it without exposing myself to inevitable
• ruin: alas! the weakness of my own heart but too
• well served his purpose. From a wish to inspire you
• with a friendship, on which I founded my hopes of
• deliverance from the horrors of my situation, I be-
• gan to feel a delight in your company that excited
• me to wish, I might not be indifferent to you. I
• even, with shame I own it, had hopes of inspiring
• you with love. My wicked husband seeing I made
• him no reproaches, believed I felt no uneasiness in
• obeying him, and frankly owned, that I was not the
• first kind girl, that the priest had given him a right
• to; for he had at that time three wives.

• He was now become so indifferent to me, that this
• new proof of baseness gave me but little disturbance.
• My whole mind was engrossed by the thoughts of
• rendering myself agreeable to you, and I believed I
• had so well succeeded, that I could almost have ven-
• tured a discovery. I thought my self secure of your
• heart, and while I was entertaining myself with ideas
• of happiness, that I now blush to remember, an un-
• expected run of good fortune at play gave my hus-
• band the possession of a pretty large sum of money.
• It was this that enabled him to assist you. The day
• before

‘ before you was robbed, he gave me the note I sent you,
 ‘ to purchase some ornaments that he thought would
 ‘ give a better colour to his appearing a man of wealth;
 ‘ when your emotion on the sight of the picture, and
 ‘ your confessing yourself engaged, made me instantly
 ‘ resolve to hide myself for ever from your sight. I
 ‘ never intended to have discovered my misery; but
 ‘ alas! it is now past concealment: my barbarous
 ‘ husband has been all this morning engaged at play;
 ‘ about noon he came home, and asked me for the
 ‘ note, which he knew, I had made no use of. I
 ‘ would have evaded letting him know, what I had
 ‘ done with it. He tore from me my keys; but instead
 ‘ of finding what he wanted, he seized on your letter
 ‘ in which you confess the engagements of your heart.
 ‘ At this he flew into a rage, that filled me with terror,
 ‘ vowed he would be revenged on me for my contri-
 ‘ vance and deceit, and left the apartment in a wild
 ‘ disorder, but returned in a few minutes followed by
 ‘ a porter, whom he ordered to help him to pack up
 ‘ all my cloaths. In spite of my prayers and entreaties
 ‘ he discharged the lodgings, and had the cruelty to
 ‘ tell the woman where we lived, that I had robbed
 ‘ him. This black calumny so hardened her heart, that
 ‘ she turned me into the street. It is to implore your
 ‘ protection that I appear before you: save me from
 ‘ destruction. I have in England a relation that will
 ‘ repay all my obligations.’

C H A P. VI.

Trueman involved in fresh troubles, occasioned by his
 compassion for the unhappy Cleora.

THE artless relation recited in the preceding chap-
 ter, gave the benevolent heart of Trueman
 strong sensations of pity for the fair sufferer. He pre-
 vailed on the landlord of the house where he was, to
 furnish the unhappy Cleora with a lodging for that
 night, purposing in the morning to recommend her to
 the compassion of Mrs. Stewart. The next day before

it was well light, the family was disturbed by a loud knocking. Mr. Trueman had, after a restless night, just fallen into a sound sleep; but was waked by a person's calling and thundering at his chamber door. On his opening his eyes he beheld Cleora pale as ashes at his bed's foot, and heard her husband storming for entrance. 'O, Sir,' said the poor trembling creature, 'I shall ruin you. I heard my husband's voice, and ran hither, without knowing it was your chamber. He will improve this accident to his own purposes. Hide me from him. Save me: save yourself.'

As Trueman knew no guilt, he was in no great fear on his own account; but the terror and tears of the affrighted Cleora would perhaps, have induced him to conceal her, had it been possible. He promised her protection, and endeavoured to calm her fears, but the menaces of the people at the door, who threatened to burst it open, if he did not let them in, soon alarmed him on his own account. His landlord desired him to open it, saying, the gentleman would be satisfied, if he searched, and found that he was not in company with his spouse. At this instant, a voice thundered out, 'The strumpet is with him. I see her. It is in vain to deny her guilt.' Trueman, in spite of all the compassion he felt for the unhappy Cleora, would gladly at that time, have had her under the care of any other champion; however, he was obliged to let in those who were without, as they seemed resolved on entrance.

The first words the husband of Cleora addressed to Trueman, was, upbraiding him for his ingratitude, in seducing the wife of a man who had given him many proofs of friendship, and loud threatenings of revenge. The lady stood weeping by, in the greatest agony at hearing her fame so cruelly mangled, by a wretch who had reduced her to the utmost misery. There were so many appearances against her, that in vain she asserted her innocence, and even the master of the lodgings joined with the rest to revile her for bringing a scandal on his house.

Trueman's

Trueman's valet, who was endeavouring to quiet the mob below, was the only person, except herself, that could give the least plausible account of her being found in his master's chamber. This man lay in an adjoining closet, and as he happened to be awake at the first knocking at the door, he slipped out of bed to learn the cause of the disturbance, and left his master's door unlocked. The terrified Cleora, whose cares kept her waking, had also heard the noise, and was running down stairs without any fixed design. She was half undrest, and as she heard the footsteps of a man, she ran into the room in which she was unhappily found, to avoid being seen. The servant secure that his master had no female companion, opened the outward door very readily, when the voice of Cleora's husband so terrified the poor creature, that she, unmindful of the consequences that might proceed from her folly, fastened the door on the inside, and was hastening to find a place to conceal herself from his search, when she discovered that she was in Trueman's room. She had no time to rectify her mistake, or alter her conduct; for her husband was already on the stairs.

This account appeared to those that heard it, as a poor evasion. Trueman, who was just waked out of his sleep, was unable to form for himself a vindication more satisfactory, and was also borne down by numbers, who joined with the husband, and loudly exclaimed against the baseness of such proceedings. As Mr. Trueman had learned very little French, he could not understand half of what was said, till an English gentleman who appeared to be a perfect stranger to both the contending parties, took Trueman aside, and after asking him some questions, concerning the circumstances of the lady's spouse, advised him by all means to make up the affair; 'for,' said he, 'if the gentleman does as he says, you will, whether you are innocent or guilty, be in equal danger; he will undoubtedly challenge you, and if I am not mistaken in the person, he is a perfect master in the art of defence.' Trueman replied very coolly, he should give him no opportunity to try his skill, 'Why then, Sir,' replied the

other, 'you will lose your character; however, 'tis no
'business of mine.'

No sooner was there an intimation conveyed to the enraged husband, that he might bluster without danger, as Trueman seemed to have no stomach for fighting, than he threatened blood and death should be the consequence of his great revenge.

To all this blustering Mr. Trueman answered with great composure, that he was not fond enough of life, to be much concerned at his menaces; and that if he was attacked, he should endeavour to defend himself: till then, he said, he desired to be in peace in his own apartment, which he begged them to quit.

Poor Cleora was in the utmost agitation on the matter of the house insisting on her going out of it; and as she had no place to go to, she, with a beseeching look, implored the pity of Trueman, on which he gave her money sufficient to procure her what accommodations she stood in need of, and promised her his protection and recommendation to a lady who, he was sure, would commiserate her distresses.

The next morning on his waiting on Mr. and Mrs. Stewart, he found the disturbance had made no little noise. He even had some difficulty to persuade the lady to believe the charge against him was without foundation, and all his rhetoric could not prevail in behalf of Cleora. He was therefore reduced to the necessity of taking that unfortunate woman under his own care, and by that means strengthening the popular prejudice against him, or of abandoning her to the horrors of the most melancholy situation: the last his humanity forbade.

He waited a day or two without hearing any thing from her unworthy husband; but at last he was informed by Mr. Stewart, that all his mighty blustering was to be satisfied without bloodshed, though in a manner, perhaps, not much less to be dreaded, since the gentleman had commenced a process against him for damages, that would, if he was successful in his law-suit, strip Trueman of his whole estate. Secure in his own integrity, Mr.

Trueman,

Trueman was inclined to run the hazard of a decision; but Mr. Stewart, who had taken the pains to make some enquiries into the laws of France; was so far from advising him to that step, that he would not suffer him to return to his own lodgings, nor to give the least intelligence to any one, where he might be found. It was not without reason that he used this precaution, since he had not been long absent, before his apartment was filled with the officers of justice, and their assistants.

This news was brought to Trueman by his friend Mr. Stewart to his retreat, which, to prevent suspicion, was in a mean house in the suburbs, where he pretended, by the advice of his friend, to be an English footman, who having lost his master, waited for a conveyance to his own country. By this means he eluded all search; but the distresses, accumulated distresses of the miserable Cleora, sat heavy on his mind. He recommended her in very warm terms to the care of Mr. Stewart, and gave him all the cash he could possibly spare for her use, if he should be able to find her; but in vain did that gentleman make the strictest enquiry; the poor lady terrified at her husband's threats, kept herself concealed.

C H A P. VII.

Mr. Trueman sets out on his journey to Calais, and is detained on the road by the sickness of his servant, who proves the source of new troubles. He arrives in London, and is seen by Miss Williams in company with a lady, to whom she believes he is married.

IN the house where Trueman was, which was a kind of rendezvous for English servants, when out of place, he had often taken notice of a genteel lad, that wore the most dejected look, and had observed his eyes frequently filled with tears. He also took notice that he did not eat with the family, but seemed to be in a situation the most forlorn and uncomfortable. He men-

tioned this youth to Mr. Stewart, who, from his description wished to see him; and as he wanted an additional servant, had some thoughts of taking him into his service.

The youth appeared; but when the gentleman beheld him, he knew him to be the person who had brought him the intelligence of a law-suit being commenced against Trueman, and by that means had given him an opportunity to conceal himself.

As Mr. Trueman had not the least knowledge of the young man prior to this obligation, he asked him, by whose desire he had interested himself in his affairs; when the youth replied, with some confusion, that he had as much reason as himself to wish to be concealed, and if his acquainting his friend with what was designed against him was of any service, he should think himself well repaid, if he would permit him to attend him in his voyage to England.

The weakness of Trueman's purse, which contained only the remains of what he had borrowed of Mr. Stewart, would have dissuaded him from accepting the services of this youth; but compassion and gratitude got the better of this reason, and they set out together for Calais, where Mr. Trueman intended to embark. They had considerably above an hundred miles to ride, and though this journey was nothing to Trueman, his new servant found it an intolerable fatigue. The first day, however, he made no complaint, though long before night, his master observed, that he could hardly sit his horse; but on his being called the following morning, the poor creature confessed his utter inability to proceed, and desired to speak with his master. When Mr. Trueman went to his bed side, the youth begged him to leave him where he was, and not suffer an unhappy creature to reduce him to difficulties. 'I have deceived you,' he added, 'but heaven will not permit me to reap the benefit I hoped to obtain by the deceit. You see before you an impostor, that has twice been different from what she seemed; but I can take that heaven that has frustrated my hopes of seeing my native country and friends to witness, that I put
' on

‘ on this habit of a boy, as much to serve you as to conceal myself. My wish succeeded and you are safe. This will be a consolation to the miserable Cleora, though left among strangers.’ A torrent of tears concluded this discovery.

Trueman was perfectly stunned at what he heard. I have already mentioned his recommending the interest of this unhappy woman to his friend Mr. Stewart, and that on their separating, he had prevailed on that gentleman to promise to use all his endeavours to find her ; and had actually left in his hands whatever he could spare from his own necessities, for her use. What could he now do ? gratitude and pity forbid his forsaking her, in her present wretched situation : the fatigue of the journey had thrown her into a fever, which, in another conversation with her supposed master, she attributed to the weakness occasioned by want of food ; for she told him, she had gone two or three days with very little subsistence, as she durst not discover herself, lest she should be betrayed ; and had been robbed of what money he had given her the morning she was found in his room by her husband. On their consulting a physician, he gave them hopes, that a few days would terminate the young man’s illness, for such she was believed to be, by all but Trueman, who now promised not to leave her, till he had happily returned his obligations, by placing her under the protection of her relations, who, she told him, lived in London in affluent circumstances. He took advantage of the time taken up in waiting for her being fit to travel, to write to Mr. Stewart, to desire that gentleman to send him cash to the place where he then was ; for he did not doubt but Miss Jenny had sent him a supply ; but he had the mortification to learn from him, that the banker believing him then in England, had sent back the notes ; however he, from his own purse, obliged him with what was sufficient for his present relief, and at the same time informed him, that all his endeavours to find Cleora had been fruitless, and that her husband was thrown in prison for debt.

During all these perplexities, the lovely Peggy was not forgot; she had still no small share in his heart; but could he have known the contents of Mrs. Saunders's letter, how deep would have been his regret to have lost the pleasure of receiving it? but alas! he still believed his beloved Peggy unworthy his sighs. How painful would have been his stay, notwithstanding all his compassion for Cleora, if he had had the least hopes that his dear Miss Williams wished for his return with the greatest ardour; but he was destined to remain some time longer ignorant of his happiness.

As soon as Cleora's health would permit, they again set out for Calais, which they reached without any hinderance, the young lady still wearing the disguise of a servant; but as soon as she landed at Dover, she changed her dress for one suitable to her sex. They made no stay, but hurried to London, for whatever friendship Trueman felt for his fair companion, as she was the wife of another man, he did not chuse to hurt his character with his friends, by appearing her champion; he wished but to deliver her, according to her own desire, into the care of her family.

They came from Dover in a post-chaise, and took coach to a milliner's with whom Cleora had formerly dealt, in order to purchase several things that she was in immediate want of. Miss Williams was in this woman's parlour when the coach stopped at the door; she saw Trueman hand the lady out; but she saw no more. A sudden stupefaction shut up all her senses, and in this state she was left alone, as the mistress of the shop had run behind the counter to her old customer. A few minutes brought Peggy to herself; but the gentleman was gone. The young lady came into the room where she was, when the talkative milliner gave poor Miss Williams pain by wishing the lady joy, and telling her she thought her spouse well deserved the preference she had given him to her old lover. The lady made very little answer to her congratulations, but wore a look of constraint, which Peggy observing, took her leave, having already heard too much for her peace.

On her return home, she told Mrs. Goodwin what she had seen and heard, and that lady began now to believe, that Miss Peggy had irretrievably lost her lover; but for further satisfaction as to the truth of their suspicions, she went herself, without saying any thing to Peggy, to the milliner's, where she was told, that the young lady she enquired after, was lately married to an English gentleman in France, and that she had taken an apartment in a neighbouring street, where she intended to stay till she should be reconciled to her relations, Mrs. Goodwin took a direction to her lodgings; but the sight of Trueman, who was looking out of a window in the same house, appeared to her too strong a confirmation of Peggy's suspicions for her to need further proof. Her first sensations inclined her, from a sense of pity to Miss Williams to blame him; but when she remembered the many reasons he had to think his Peggy faithless, she thought him rather an object of compassion than blame, since she imagined with truth, that Miss Williams was still the mistress of his choice, whatever concurring circumstances had forced him to give his person to another. She indeed fancied it had been out of pique and revenge, that he had thus rushed on matrimony; a conduct scarce ever pursued by either sex, without being attended with very dreadful consequences: that revenge designed to torment a false mistress or lover, is retorted back to their own bosoms with redoubled weight, since their being prepossessed in favour of another, almost always renders the wife or husband who becomes such out of meer spite, an object of aversion and distaste, rather than delight. This reflection did not escape Mrs. Goodwin. When she returned home, she did not tell Peggy what she believed of Trueman; but set herself in earnest to divert her attention from being fixed on him.

C H A P. VIII.

A very important discovery.

THE agreeable Julia had kept a correspondence with Miss Williams, and had given her frequent invitations to her seat, which she had declined complying with from a regard to Mrs. Goodwin, whom she did not care to leave, and that lady could not accompany her without leaving her brother alone, who had been in a melancholy way, and in a manner secluded from the world ever since the death of his wife and child. This last obstacle was now removed ; for he was gone out of town for the recovery of his health, of which they had some hopes, and Mr. Williams, whose business was the taking care of a small estate, lately purchased by that gentleman, and to which he was retired, was his constant companion. This last circumstance gave great pleasure to Miss Williams, his daughter, as she hoped Mr. le Brun's being pleased with her father's conversation, would tend to remove the prejudice she but too plainly saw her dear Mrs. Goodwin had conceived against him, on account of what had been told her servant of his leaving his wife, and living with another woman. She could not, without injuring the truth, vindicate him in this particular, as he in his own letter confessed the accusation, and she always found, however candid her friend was in other respects, that she was ready to say with Prior,

- ‘ She thought no mercy should be had
- ‘ On marry'd men that dar'd be bad.

The time was now approaching that was to let Peggy see the reason of this lady's bitterness against a particular vice, while she pitied the follies and even the faults of her fellow creatures, in almost every other instance. As she thought that new objects might divert Peggy's mind, she proposed to take an excursion with her into the country. The proposal was accepted, and they

they determined to pay a visit to the agreeable Julia ; but before they went, they sent an account of their intended journey to Mrs. Saunders, and begged her when she wrote, to send her letters to the lady's house, which they intended to make their residence during their stay in the country. They informed her as of a certainty of Trueman's marriage ; but though Peggy was the scribe, she added no reproaches to the information, but smothered her griefs in her own bosom, as she now believed her loss irretrievable.

They left London the day she wrote to her friend, and met, after a journey in which happened nothing remarkable, a sincere and hearty welcome from the hospitable Julia.

Mrs. Goodwin found in the house, in quality of upper servant, a French woman to whom she was well known : this woman was greatly in favour with her lady, and was used by her with much freedom on account of some former obligations. On the first sight of Mrs. Goodwin, she made an exclamation in French that excited her mistress's attention, who bid her explain herself, which she did by going to Mrs. Goodwin, and asking if she did not remember Magdalen, whom she had so often seen, when she was in a convent in Paris. After a few moments thought, Mrs. Goodwin remembered her to have been a servant, who came with messages to some of the sisters in the nunnery ; but could not recollect to whose family she belonged, till the woman with a shower of tears, told her, that sister Beatrice was her young mistress, and that her death had been the occasion of her leaving France. As this nun had been Mrs. Goodwin's companion and chief favourite, she could not deny a tear to her memory, though she comforted the poor woman with the consideration of her being out of the reach of all care and misfortune.

Mrs. Goodwin had no sooner done speaking, than Magdalen, as if actuated by a sudden thought, went hastily out of the room ; but soon returned with a small parcel, which she put into Mrs. Goodwin's hands, saying, the lady with whom she had intrusted it, returned

to

to Paris, without being able to find the gentleman to whom it was directed, and when on enquiry, she found, that Mrs. Goodwin was gone from the convent, she gave it Beatrice, who she knew was her intimate friend, to send it to her the first opportunity ; that her dear mistress was seized with sickness a few days afterwards, and had on her death-bed delivered it to her, with a solemn charge to keep it till she could either find out the person to whom it was directed, or Mrs. Goodwin herself.

Miss Peggy sat in a profound revery, wondering in what this unexpected meeting would end, when Julia cried out, as she saw Magdalen give her the parcel, ‘ Are you then, Madam, that worthy lady that my friend Beatrice praised with so much warmth, for an example of conjugal fidelity to an ungrateful husband ? I admired your virtues without being acquainted with your person, and I feel extreme pleasure in the unexpected happiness I shall enjoy in your conversation. I, by the desire of Magdalen, tried all in my power to find your spouse, but could not ; however, I hope you have been more successful.’

A deep sigh was the only answer returned by Mrs. Goodwin. She opened her parcel, and took from it a picture in miniature, which she looked at, and was putting in her pocket, when Peggy eagerly pulling hold of her arm, begged to see it, believing it to be one she had lost, as it was exactly like it on the outside ; but she had no sooner cast her eyes on the portraiture, than she, with the greatest emotion pronounced the words, ‘ My father !’ and dropped it from her trembling hand on the floor. Her action and tremor were taken notice of by all in the room ; but Mrs. Goodwin catching up the picture, returned hastily, ‘ Thy father ! my dear, does thy father resemble this picture ?’ Peggy having a little recovered herself, replied, ‘ It is, madam, his very likeness ; and I once had another in my possession that was as like it on the outside ; but it was stole from me.’ Was there a face in that too ? returned Mrs. Goodwin with the utmost eagerness and attention in her look. ‘ There was, madam,’

dam,' said Peggy, 'one which I have often thought had some resemblance to you, and on that account I regretted its loss.' 'Good heaven!' cried Mrs. Goodwin, 'what wild Chimeras whirl through my brain! tell me, my good girl, tell me quickly, from whom you received this picture.' 'From my father, madam, returned Peggy, nearly as much agitated as Mrs. Goodwin. 'He gave it me when he was obliged to leave me, and bid me be sure to keep it till his return. One thing more,' said the lady, 'and I have done: Can you tell me exactly your own age?' 'My father has told me, madam,' she answered, 'that I was born on the fifteenth of July, and I think I shall be twenty-three the next birth-day: but why, dear madam, do you look at me with such tenderness? I tremble lest I have given you pain.' Mrs. Goodwin here sighed out. 'It cannot, cannot be. It would be too much happiness for mortality. Yet once more, did you ever hear your father talk of having been in France?' 'Yes, madam,' Peggy replied, almost unable to speak, he has told me I was born there, and her I called my mother, has frequently said, she brought me from thence while I sucked.' 'Called your mother,' answered Mrs. Goodwin, 'what reason have you to believe that she was not so? she told me so when she was dying,' said Peggy, 'and my father confirmed it in a letter I received from him just after her death.' 'Good God!' cried Mrs. Goodwin, bending her head into Peggy's neck, 'does these concurring circumstances meet but to mock my hopes? If you are my child, my lamented child, nature has given you a mark that cannot deceive me'——'A rose bud at the top of my neck behind,' answered Miss Williams, holding up her hair, which hanging in her neck, had hitherto prevented its being observed.

The lady looked on the mark; but her transport was too great for words: they mingled sighs and tears, and continued some time without the power of speech, while Mrs. Gibson and the faithful Magdalen took no small part in a happiness, which they were careful
not

not to interrupt. At length Mrs. Goodwin broke silence, and raised her kneeling daughter from the ground, to which she had dropped as much through weakness, as by design, saying, 'My dear, a bended knee is, in my opinion, due to God alone. Rise to the arms of the fondest of mothers, whose care shall be to make thee as happy as thou hast now made me.' Peggy's tears and the fullness of her heart rendered her answer entirely unintelligible; but she again threw herself into her mother's embrace, and shewed all the marks of the most lively affection.

When they grew calm enough to attend to any thing about them, they received the congratulations of Mrs. Gibson and her humble companion, who had too great a share in this happy discovery, not to be looked upon, by the condescending Mrs. Goodwin, with great complacency. Miss Williams now begged her Mamma to let her acquaint her father with her happiness; but to her surprize, she found her absolutely against it. 'There alone I dread disappointment,' said Mrs. Goodwin sighing. 'Could I be sure thy father repented his so cruelly leaving me, I would myself outgo the post to meet him; but while I am in a situation so much above him, how can I be sure that the advantage he may hope to enjoy by a reconciliation, may not be the motive of his wishing it? This suspicion would take off the relish of every comfort: I therefore charge thee to conceal from him what has passed, till I can find an opportunity to appear before him in a manner that can give him no prospect of happiness, without he still loves me, and wishes our mutual faults may be mutually forgotten.'

Peggy yielded to these reasonings, tho' she longed to bless her father with the news that had given to herself such intense delight.

In order to take off from Mrs. Goodwin's mind all uneasiness, Miss Williams told her, the flutter her father had been in, at the sight of a lady, and what he had said to her on her return home, and begged her to recollect if she had been that day in the street in which they lived. The lady remembered she had been through

through it in a coach, and that she had found Peggy at her house when she came home, and from this little incident, she conceived hopes that she was still dear to her husband, hopes that made her impatiently long for an interview, and to that end she was determined to hasten her journey to town, as she thought her own house the properest place in which to make the important discovery.

Mrs. Gibson, partly to satisfy her own curiosity, and partly out of regard to the health of her guests, warmly insisted on their staying with her a day or two, before they set out for London. They had both been extremely moved, and the lady, with great justice, urged, that the mind being much agitated, frequently had an unhappy effect on the body, which was not felt during the first emotions. If this should be the case with either of them, she alleged, it would probably render their journey extremely disagreeable; 'besides,' continued Mrs. Gibson, 'there appears so many strange inconsistencies in your knowing one another for several years, without finding out your relation to each other, that I can't for my life, suppose my desire of hearing this perplexed affair cleared up.' Peggy herself longed to hear her mother's history from her own mouth, and therefore joined her entreaties to those of Mrs. Gibson, that she would defer her journey, and in the mean time give them the recital. She complied with their request, and satisfied their curiosity, by relating what will be found in the following chapter.

C H A P. IX.

The history of Mrs. GOODWIN.

'IN order to your understanding my history,' said Mrs. Goodwin, 'I must make you acquainted with some circumstances relating to my mother, some years prior to the time of my birth. Her father was a tradesman; but as he had a large family, he could give his daughters but small fortunes. This disadvantage

‘vantage exposed my mother to many hardships, and
‘for many years deprived her of the blessing of mar-
‘rying the man she loved. Her lover’s father was a
‘sea-captain reputed extremely rich, who no sooner
‘heard of his son’s attachment to my mother, than he
‘took him with him in a voyage he made to the Indies.
‘My mother’s father, provoked at the contempt with
‘which both himself and child had been treated by
‘this rough seaman, expressly forbid his daughter’s
‘holding any correspondence with the young gentle-
‘man, while the captain on his side, was resolutely
‘resolved to hinder his son’s carrying on any corre-
‘spondence with my mother, and took such effectual
‘care to prevent it, that not one letter reached her
‘hands, though she was many years afterwards in-
‘formed, that her lover had wrote her several.

‘During the time destined for her lover’s continuing
‘beyond sea, my mother was strongly pressed by her fa-
‘ther to marry, and had in reality, several advanta-
‘geous offers, which she rejected, in hopes of his re-
‘turn : but instead of seeing him, she received from
‘public report, the melancholy news, that his father’s
‘ship was cast away, and the whole crew lost, not ex-
‘cepting the captain and his son. She mourned the death
‘of her lover with unfeigned sorrow ; but at length
‘was prevailed on by her father, to marry a French
‘gentleman, who had many years boarded at his
‘house. My mother was bred a protestant ; but she
‘soon after her marriage changed the faith in which
‘she had been educated, for the catholic religion, which
‘was that of her husband. I have heard her say, that
‘she lived with this gentleman only three years, and
‘had by him no other child besides my brother le
‘Brun.

‘As her husband was in a declining state of health,
‘several months before his death, he was advised to
‘make trial of his native air, and he and his young
‘wife set out for France, leaving my brother to the
‘care of my grandfather. My mother’s husband sur-
‘vived this voyage and journey but a short time, and
‘when he died left his affairs in the utmost disorder.

‘My

' My mother applied to her father to support her against
 ' the injustice of her husband's relations : but in the short
 ' time of her absence, he had met with a considerable loss,
 ' by the failure of a banker, and was become unable to
 ' afford her any other assistance besides the maintenance
 ' of her little boy, whom he would not part with, lest he
 ' should be brought up a papist. The justice of her
 ' claims was of little service to her, and she would
 ' have been reduced to very considerable difficulties, if
 ' she had not been so happy as to make an impression
 ' on the heart of an old officer. This gentleman would
 ' have taken advantage of her unhappy situation, in
 ' order to seduce her virtue ; but when he found it im-
 ' practicable, he married her, and she lived with him
 ' in a state of affluence and splendor ; but as he was a
 ' man of pleasure, and fond of gay expence, at his
 ' death, which happened before she was thirty, she was
 ' again reduced to the prospect of indigence. Her un-
 ' exceptionable behaviour while she was this gentleman's
 ' wife, induced his relations to sue to the king for a small
 ' pension, which she was happy enough to obtain.
 ' She had three children by him, two of which died in
 ' their infancy, and I believed my self to be the only
 ' one that survived. I remember nothing of the death
 ' of the old officer, who I was taught to think was my
 ' father, since from the earliest ideas I can trace, I lived
 ' with my mother in a retired, but genteel manner, on
 ' her pension.

' There lived with us a blind gentleman for whom
 ' my mother had a great regard ; he was an English-
 ' man, and passed for a near relation of my mother's.
 ' Just before I married, he died, and my mother shew-
 ' ed such concern for his loss, that it raised conjectures
 ' in my mind that filled me with uneasiness ; but I kept
 ' them to my self, and my attachment to your father
 ' soon wore them off. My mother in vain combated
 ' my inclinations. I had seen Mr. Hutchinson, which
 ' was the name your father went by while in France ;
 ' he appeared to me the most agreeable man I had ever
 ' beheld. I had no fortune, and he was equally un-
 ' provided

‘ provided for : he was a protestant, I a catholic ; yet
‘ every obstacle gave way to love, and we were mar-
‘ ried. Our principal hopes of provision depended on
‘ a sister of my mother’s, whom she had brought
‘ with her from England : she had been the wife of a
‘ rich Jew. My mother’s arguments brought her to
‘ embrace the Romish religion, and as her husband
‘ was dead, she settled in Paris ; but though mistress
‘ of great wealth, she refused us all assistance : but in
‘ this she was not more unkind to us, than she was to
‘ herself ; for she lived in the utmost penury.

‘ About a year after my marriage, I was brought to
‘ bed of a daughter ; my husband was employed in a
‘ merchant’s counting house, and we lived with toler-
‘ able tranquillity till the birth of this child ; but she
‘ no sooner saw the light, than she was the innocent
‘ cause of continual quarrels betwixt us. Our first dis-
‘ ference was on the subject of her baptism ; her father
‘ insisting, that that solemnity should be performed by
‘ a protestant divine, and I as warmly asserting it to be
‘ my right to have my girl initiated into the bosom of
‘ the true church, by my own confessor. I was upheld
‘ in my obstinacy by my aunt, and my mother, and in
‘ the absence of my husband, had the child christened
‘ according to the rites of the Roman catholic church.
‘ This conduct exasperated him extremely ; he by ac-
‘ cident came home in the midst of the ceremony, and
‘ let fall some bitter speeches, not only against me, my
‘ mother, and aunt, but against the priest and our holy
‘ religion : these in Spain or Portugal, would perhaps
‘ have been punished with the mild severities of the in-
‘ quisition, as it was, they exposed him to some disa-
‘ greeable censures : however, in a few days I thought
‘ all had been forgot. When my Peggy was about eight
‘ months old, she caught the hooping cough of a child
‘ of her nurse’s ; for I was unable to suckle her myself,
‘ as I had lost my milk by the vexation I had suffered
‘ from our religious quarrels. The child, of whom
‘ she had caught it dying, I was under great anxiety on
‘ account of my own ; and while my mind was thus
‘ disturbed by my fears, I was advised by several people
‘ to

' to give her as an infallible cure, some consecrated
 ' wine. I was silly enough to acquaint my husband
 ' with this foolish prescription, which he treated as an
 ' idle superstition. I had but little to say in its defence ;
 ' but he mixed his raillery with some sarcasms, which
 ' my zeal for the religion in which I had been bred,
 ' made me think profane. In short, this trifling inci-
 ' dent was the cause of the most inveterate quarrel that
 ' perhaps ever subsisted between two people that sin-
 ' cerely loved. He went from me with all the marks
 ' of a settled resentment painted on his countenance. I
 ' expected him home at the usual hour ; I determined
 ' to make him an acknowledgement of my too great
 ' obstinacy, and resolved to try all the arts of fondness
 ' to sooth him into temper : but alas ! I in vain sat up
 ' all night waiting his coming. In the morning he re-
 ' turned, but stayed no longer in the house than to shift
 ' himself. Mean while, I was unhappily gone to seek
 ' him, and my mother who felt not my affection, was
 ' far from making any concessions ; but reproached
 ' him, and renewed the bickerings of the former day.
 ' In the midst of her reproaches, he rushed out of the
 ' house, saying, he would no more expose himself to
 ' the bitterness of her tongue. When I came back
 ' from the place where I had been to seek him, I was
 ' informed by my mother of what had passed. Terri-
 ' fied at his threats, I entirely forgot my child, and
 ' spent the whole day in the most intolerable anguish.
 ' In the evening I went again to the place where I
 ' thought it was most likely I should find him ; but had
 ' the mortification to hear that he had in the morning
 ' settled with the gentleman by whom he was employ-
 ' ed, and had not been there since. This made me be-
 ' lieve he had put his threats in execution, and had
 ' rendered me the most miserable of women by leaving
 ' me. When I came home, the excess of my grief
 ' moved my mother to pity me, and she, forgetting
 ' her resentment to my husband, who had really used
 ' her disrespectfully, employed her utmost diligence to
 ' discover him. Her search was fruitless, and as she
 ' was returning, she called at the nurse's, in order to
 ' bring

‘ bring my child home with her, hoping that the sight
‘ of the little creature would divert me. After having
‘ been absent several hours, she entered my apartment;
‘ (where she found me weeping, and under the greatest
‘ dejection) with a countenance that made me tremble;
‘ and flinging herself into a chair, cried, “ The news I
“ must relate will kill my child. Thy cruel husband is
“ gone to England. Would to God he had never come
“ from it.”

‘ Here she stopped. I had been arming myself for
‘ this; I therefore bore it with some firmness, and en-
‘ deavoured to comfort my mother, who was bathed
‘ in tears, with the hopes that God would support me
‘ under my terrible affliction. But without minding
‘ what I said, she burst out as soon as she could speak,
‘ into the most outrageous reflections against my hus-
‘ band. Cruel as he was I took his part. She bid me
‘ be silent, and not defend the monster. I replied,
“ he is my husband; if I never see him more, he is
“ still the father of my infant, and for her sake I have
“ lost him.” “ Oh!” said my mother, in all the vio-
‘ lence of grief; “ had he left the sweet creature be-
“ hind, I could have forgiven him.” “ Left her!” I
‘ cried, almost distracted; “ he has not, he cannot
“ have robbed me of my child!” ‘ The bare suggestion
‘ threw me senseless at my mother’s feet. When I came
‘ to myself, the first words I spoke, was to ask for my
‘ child. Tears was all the answer returned me, either
‘ by my mother or aunt. I again begged to see her:
‘ my mother at first made some excuses, and urged that
‘ it was an improper time to let her come to me; but
‘ my aunt who had never known what it was to have
‘ a child, blamed her for her caution, and told me,
‘ without any preparation, that my husband had taken
‘ with him both the infant and her nurse.

‘ Her thus setting before me, at full view, all that
‘ could make me wretched, threw me into violent a-
‘ gones, and gave all about me reason to fear that I
‘ should lose my senses, if not my life: however, it
‘ pleased God that I survived this double loss: but my
‘ mother, who was extremely fond of her little grand-
‘ daughter,

daughter, was never well afterwards. It was to no purpose that my mother sent orders to my brother in England to use all his diligence to discover my husband ; it was our opinion that he either changed his name, or never went to London ; for we could hear nothing of him.

My mother lingered near a year, after my husband left me : she retained her senses to the last ; and when she thought herself near her end, she ordered me to sit by her bed-side, when, to my astonishment, she began in the following manner.

" You believe yourself, my dear, and every one who knows you, except my sister, believe you to be the daughter of captain des Launy ; but you are in reality Mr. Goodwin's child." This was the name of the blind gentleman who boarded with us. In spite of my mother's weakness, and the regard I had for her, I interrupted her, by crying out, " Good heaven ! what a wretched creature ! without a husband, childless, and a bastard ! What will become of me ?" My mother begged me to let her proceed, as she might be soon incapable of letting me know, what it was necessary I should be informed of. I swallowed my sighs, and she went on ; she had before given me an account of her life as far as the death of her husband the officer, and his relations procuring her a pension : she now told me, that the grant of this pension continued no longer than while she remained single, that when her husband died, he left her a daughter scarce three months old, and that soon after, she became a widow, she went to pay a visit to her father, and to see the son she had by her first husband.

While she was in England, she was informed that her first lover was still living, having been saved from perishing in the sea by an Algerine pirate, who kept him nine years as a slave ; that he came to England in the most wretched condition, as he owed his liberty to the loss of his sight, his master having by an accidental blow aimed at another, struck out one of his eyes ; and that his other had had a speck growing over

‘ over it many years. His being reduced to total darkness, rendered him of little use, and the accident awakened even the pity of a pirate. When he came home, he found a younger brother in the possession of his father’s effects : his long absence from his native country, rendered him unknown to all his father’s friends ; his person was prodigiously altered, by the fatigues he had suffered in his captivity, and by his blindness. His brother was almost a child when he left England, and very probably did not remember him. The poor man was destitute and without resource, when he thought of coming to my grandfather’s, believing that my mother, as she could have no interest in his remaining unknown, might remember him, though he was forgot by his nearest relations. He was introduced into my grandfather’s chamber, who was ill of the gout, a day or two before that in which they expected my mother from Paris. None in the family could trace his features ; but he mentioned several circumstances, that inclined my mother’s father to believe he was the person he pretended to be.

‘ When my mother arrived, she was informed of this visit, and from a love of justice, as well as from some remains of her former esteem, she was at the pains of finding him out. She was brought before him without his being apprised of her coming, and remained silent till she had surveyed him carefully ; when she herself, assured as she was that she should know him, was greatly in doubt of his being an impostor, till on her speaking to a servant she had brought with her, the poor man in a transport of joy, cried out, “ The voice of my dear Molly ! it is now I regret the want of sight, since no object could give me half the pleasure I should feel in once more beholding her.”

‘ On his pronouncing these words, the big tear rolled from his sightless eyes, and raised the strongest sensations of pity in the bosom of my mother. As soon as she could speak, she assured him of her friendship

ship and esteem, told him her present situation, and offered to serve him with her utmost ability. She consulted lawyers in his behalf; but they unanimously gave her to understand, that if he had no better a foundation to build his claim upon than what could arise from her evidence, he would run the greatest hazard of losing his cause. My mother staid several months in England, in which time pity and friendship gave place to still softer sensations. She could not think of abandoning, in this cruel situation, a man she had once tenderly loved; she proposed his going to Paris with her, and sharing her pension, which was all she had to offer him. This proof of regard emboldened him to ask for still greater favours. In short, they were privately married before she quitted England.

My mother was obliged, in order to preserve her pension, to keep this engagement an inviolable secret, as she had no other support for herself, her husband, and a little girl her late husband left her; and this was the reason of Mr. Goodwin's passing for her relation.

When she had been married some time, her growing big with me, made it necessary for her to pay another visit to my grandfather: she was brought to bed in his house, and designed to leave me to his care, till he could have me with her, without suspicion of my being her daughter. She left also my half sister, with an intention to visit us the following summer: but the death of this child, which was occasioned by the small-pox before she was three years old, or I had reached a twelvemonth, put into my grandfather's head, the design of making me pass for the deceased captain's daughter, and by that means putting a stop to all enquiry concerning me, when I should arrive at an age proper for me to be under my mother's eye. This scheme he communicated by letter to my mother, at the time when he sent her the news of my sister's death. Grief for the loss of her child, at first took up all her attention: but her husband's entreaties prevailed with her to keep the

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' cause

‘ cause of her tears a secret, and to comply with my
 ‘ grandfather’s advice. My being a healthy strong
 ‘ girl favoured the deceit, and I was brought from
 ‘ England, when I was only four years old, and ac-
 ‘ knowleged as the captain’s daughter by the few of
 ‘ his relations that visited my mother.

‘ When my mother had given me this relation, she
 ‘ continued, “ I leave you, my dear child, without
 “ provision, since you can’t even solicit support from
 “ the captain’s friends, without injustice and prevari-
 “ cation. I might, if I would have accepted it, have
 “ had you amply provided for; but the reproaches I
 “ should have felt from my own mind, made me, dear
 “ as you are to me, deaf to the calls of your interest.
 “ My sister has been prevailed on by my tears and
 “ entreaties, to promise after my death, to grant you a
 “ retreat in a convent. She is very rich; but you
 “ know her temper, she will part with little while she
 “ lives, and she even granted me the promise of giv-
 “ ing you succour, but on one condition, which is,
 “ that you renounce for ever your husband; and in
 “ order to prevent his finding you out, take on your-
 “ self the name of your father and hide yourself from
 “ the world.” ‘ I treated these conditions as meer
 ‘ tyranny; but my aunt soon convinced me, they had
 ‘ more reason in them than I imagined, since it was
 ‘ not the least likely that my husband continued to
 ‘ love me, though if I was even in circumstances to
 ‘ tempt him to return, he might possibly pretend it,
 ‘ in order to share my wealth.

‘ My mother did not survive many days, and as
 ‘ soon as her funeral was over, I retired to the con-
 ‘ vent, where I had the happiness of becoming ac-
 ‘ quainted with sister Beatrice, my aunt allowing me a
 ‘ very slender provision. I complied with all her in-
 ‘ junctions, except that of renouncing my husband:
 ‘ what reason have I to bless heaven, that my indi-
 ‘ gence did not force me to that! Sister Beatrice was
 ‘ visited in her retirement by a lady who boarded at
 ‘ her father’s, and had lately embraced the protestant
 ‘ faith; this young creature, I have heard her speak
 ‘ of

‘ of with great affection, and the most ardent wishes
 ‘ for her being restored to the bosom of the church.
 ‘ These desires caused us both to talk with her on the
 ‘ subject of religion, when the lady instead of being
 ‘ convinced by our arguments of her being in an error,
 ‘ raised some doubts in my mind concerning the truth
 ‘ of the catholic faith. These doubts I communicated
 ‘ to Beatrice, and this confidence rendered us still
 ‘ dearer to each other. The lady set out for England,
 ‘ and I entrusted her with the packet I have in my
 ‘ hand.

‘ When she was gone we had by the assistance of a
 ‘ servant who brought up Beatrice, and who, I sup-
 ‘ pose, is the person to whom I am beholden for this
 ‘ delightful discovery, several protestant books brought
 ‘ to us in the convent, which we read together. The
 ‘ reasonings we found in these encreased our curiosity
 ‘ to know more of a faith, that we had been taught to
 ‘ believe led to damnation. This curiosity, if it did
 ‘ not immediately help us to full conviction, filled our
 ‘ minds with uneasiness, took from us that implicit
 ‘ faith we had hitherto had in the direction of our spi-
 ‘ ritual guides, and caused a remissness in our regards
 ‘ to the externals of our religion, that raised the suspi-
 ‘ cions of the nuns so far, as to make them watch us
 ‘ with the greatest circumspection. We were seen read-
 ‘ ing; the cell of Beatrice was searched, and there
 ‘ were found an English Bible, and a volume wrote by
 ‘ one Chillingworth. Horrid crimes! for which my
 ‘ friend Beatrice was forced to suffer a severe penance,
 ‘ and I was threatned with complaint being made to
 ‘ my aunt. This I dreaded, as I knew her to be a
 ‘ blind bigot to her faith; however, the notice I re-
 ‘ ceived of her illness, dissipated my fears on this ac-
 ‘ count, and her death soon rendered me independent.’

Miss Peggy, as soon as her mamma was silent,
 begged to be informed of the contents of the letter,
 which she supposed was designed for her father, and
 the reason of her sending his picture inclosed in it.
 The lady told her at the time of her writing that letter,
 as she had lost all hopes of regaining her husband’s
 heart,

heart, nothing hindered her taking the veil, and becoming a professed nun, but her religious scruples, and that she wrote that letter to take a final leave of him, as she imagined she could trust the friend of Beatrice, who was coming to England with a commission that she durst not give to any other, lest they should inform her aunt, on whom was her whole dependance, and that she returned the picture, that she might have no object before her eyes that would disturb the tranquillity of her mind, when she had taken the irrevocable vow.

C H A P. X.

Very short, and void of incidents.

THE above discovery placed Miss Williams in a situation greatly beyond any thing that True-man could expect, as she was the apparent heiress, not only to her mamma's fortune, but also to that of her uncle le Brun. Mrs. Goodwin, now, Peggy stood in so near a relation to herself, and was likely to be her successor, and the disposer of her wealth, felt no considerable disappointment at her daughter's having lost a lover, who had it not in his power to place her in a shining station; but as she had found by experience, that opposition partakes more of the quality of oil than of water, and will rather increase, than quench a passion kindled in a young heart, she prudently resolved to leave to time, the cure of an inclination, that she plainly saw made the acquisition of a brilliant fortune be received with the same indifference that is commonly paid to the most trifling event.

Miss Peggy was extremely pleased at having the worthiest lady she knew on earth stand in so near a relation to herself, but the eclat of a shining fortune made but a small impression on her mind: she did not spend one wakeful night in contriving how to dazzle the eyes, and raise the envy of her former equals; she felt no pleasure in the prospect of the homage and respect that would be paid her new rank: but I should wrong the truth, if I attributed this moderation intire-

ly to the force of good sense and reflexion ; love had no small share in this apparent equanimity ; she believed her Trueman had given his hand to another ; and by that means deprived her of the greatest blessing in the power of gold to bestow, that of rendering happy what we esteem, and shewing to a beloved object the disinterestedness of our affection. Her mother, as she did in every other case, took hold of this opportunity to implant in her mind right principles, not in an authoritative and commanding manner, but by observing how much she was pleased with her behaviour, and the hopes her receiving so considerable an alteration in her circumstances with so much equality of temper, gave her of her making a right use of the blessings of providence. ‘ You see, my dear,’ said this worthy lady, ‘ how much satisfaction I should have lost, had I been blind to the distresses of others. What an ample reward has heaven given me, for the compassion I felt for your unhappy situation : I am persuaded an unfeeling heart deprives it self of the noblest of all enjoyments, relieving the miserable. Can the glitter of diamonds, the noise and parade of an equipage, give to a reasonable mind a delight at all comparable to that arising from our beholding the human countenance lighted up with joy, instead of being depressed with pain, anxiety, and care.’ Peggy felt the force of these reasonings ; but, as her thoughts were at that instant imployed on Trueman, her charity was less diffusive, and she could think of no happiness comparable to that she should have had in giving him delight : a deep sigh was all the reply she made ; but a letter she received from Mrs. Saunders the same day, awoke her to a more lively sense of her newly-acquired advantages.

That lady informed her, that she had heard from Trueman by the same post that brought her the account she had sent of his being married ; but that he had not mentioned a word of his being a bridegroom ; that he promised her a visit in a few days, in his way to his estate in Yorkshire, where he said he was going to live, perhaps for the remainder of his life, in a

cheerless solitude. This way of writing Mrs. Saunders observed, paid an ill compliment to a wife, if Mr. Trueman was really married, which she very much doubted. She also wrote Peggy word, that she had not sent Trueman the bills that were returned from Paris; and that she chose to omit giving him, in her answer, any account of the mistakes that had caused the indifference betwixt them, till she should learn from his own mouth whether he was disengaged.

The bare possibility of Mr. Trueman's being still unmarried gave a bloom to Miss Peggy's countenance, that the acquisition of wealth had been incapable of inspiring. She ran with avidity to her mamma, on her coming into the room where she was reading her epistle, and asked her, with the most beseeching look, if Mr. Trueman was still a batchelor, whether her change of fortune ought to make her treat him with indifference. Mrs. Goodwin, a little disconcerted at so abrupt a question, replied, that she had another's will to consult as well as hers; but she thought gratitude demanded her to look on Trueman as her equal, tho' she should be ever so much advanced above him, since he had, on his part, forgot all disparity. 'O, madam!' answered Peggy, 'if I am to depend on my father's consent to make me happy, I have but little hopes; as he would gladly have given me to another, from no other motive but the prospect of my making a figure in the world, at a time when I was much below Trueman.'

Mrs. Goodwin comforted her with the assurance of so effectually pleading the cause of a lover with her father, when the happy moment of reconciliation came, that she waited for another letter from Mrs. Saunders, with no other inquietude than what naturally arose from her doubts of Trueman's still loving her; but though these doubts rendered her far from being in a condition to be envied, the poor man who was the subject of them was still more worthy of pity.

C H A P. XI.

Trueman is rendered unhappy by the reproaches of his own mind and the machinations of an old enemy.

I Have told my readers, that Mr. Trueman was seen by Peggy in the milliner's shop, handing Cleora out of a coach; and that he was believed to be the husband of that lady by the mistress of the house. Hitherto he has been unfortunate only; but from this unlucky day he is to be the victim of self-reproach; an unguarded moment had made the temptation of a beautiful woman who loved him, too strong for his resolution. I shall not dwell on the circumstances of the lady's fall from virtue, but only say that she had acquired, in her masculine habit, a freedom of behaviour, which, tho' it might make the incitements to vice more strong and irresistible, in the first impulses of irregular desire, it rendered her, in cooler moments, an object by no means proper to inspire a lasting passion in a heart such as Trueman's. His repentance, mean as it may make him appear to the smart, bloods, and pretty fellows, was the almost immediate follower of his guilt; which he expressed in a letter to Cleora, in these terms:

'MADAM,

'Sensible of my own weakness, I durst not trust myself to see the lovely Cleora. I am no libertine; judge then what are the present horrors of my mind. You have given your vows to another, and I have basely infringed his property. When I was falsely accused of violating his bed, my innocence gave me courage; but a criminal indulgence has stripped me of all my fortitude. O Cleora! you have reason to curse me. I have robbed you of your peace of mind. This, this ought to be the motive of your anger, and not my failing you last night, in the guilty assignation. I believe our mutual fault is at present a secret

‘ from the whole world, except the woman at whose
 ‘ house we lay on our arrival in town. I will, the mo-
 ‘ ment it is in my power, which it will be in a few
 ‘ days, enable you to buy her silence, and give you
 ‘ proof how much I regard your interest, as well as
 ‘ fame. Continue in the lodgings where you are,
 ‘ and depend on a supply till you find your brother,
 ‘ and are reinstated in his favour, from him who is,

‘ Most sincerely,

‘ Your friend,

‘ JOSHUA TRUEMAN.’

The unhappy Cleora received this letter when her expectations were high raised, and she was in hopes of Trueman's coming himself to apologize for his last night's neglect. The beginning froze her heart; her education had taught her to believe that chastity in a man was a sneaking pitiful virtue, that exposed its possessor more to contempt than praise. This latitude of thinking gave her the intolerable torment of fancying she was despised, and that Trueman made use of this poor pretence to leave her without resource. The anguish of her mind was too great to be concealed; a servant in the family was present when she opened the letter, and heard her sigh out, ‘ Unhappy woman! what will become of me?’ This girl informed her mistress of the apparent uneasiness of her lodger. The woman came to her, with an officious kind of civility; but in reality the motive of her visit was to enquire into the state of her affairs, that she might know how much credit would be consistent with her interest to give to the afflicted lady.

This woman had at home with her a daughter who was usually an upper servant in some genteel family; but was at this time out of place. She was absent when the apartment was taken; but when she heard her mother call the gentleman who had taken it Trueman, she longed impatiently to see him, as she had formerly known one of the same name, who, she had heard was come to the possession of an unexpected
 estate.

estate. Her curiosity caused her to make an excuse to be admitted into the room the night after their arrival, and as she only passed through the apartment, Mr. Trueman took but little notice of her, or he would have recollected Miss Symonds's maid, the girl who had raised his anger by talking contemptuously of Peggy Williams: for her part, the time that had elapsed since her losing an advantageous service on his account, had been insufficient to cool her resentment; but he appeared at present in a station that set him above her reach: she therefore smothered her ill will, in hopes of finding another opportunity more favourable to her revenge.

The woman of the house, when she came from the weeping Cleora, communicated to her daughter her suspicion of her lodger's not being the gentleman's wife, and the danger she might be in of losing her rent, if she stayed. This intelligence gave the vindictive girl a prospect of retaliating the uneasiness she had felt, on Trueman. Full of this hope, she, with the permission of her mother, endeavoured to worm herself into the favour of Cleora, whose inexperience rendered her the dupe of her artifice. It is a trite, but true observation, that 'a drowning man will catch at a straw;' this is never better verified, than in the easy access the artful find to the heart, in an hour of anxiety and trouble: commiserate the sufferings of the unhappy, or but seem to do so, and it is five to one but you become acquainted with their causes, however improper it is they should be communicated. Our self-love inclines us to trust those who have penetration enough to see our worth through the gloom of misfortune; and we hope to lessen the weight of our woes, by the consolation we shall receive from their pity.

From these motives it was that Cleora was so imprudent as to open her heart to this young woman; she even shewed her Trueman's letter, and concealed no part of her circumstances from her; while the girl, that she may not be behind her in confidence, informed her of Mr. Trueman's having been once servant in the family where she lived, and by several disrespectful

hints, strengthened the lady's fears of his having had the inhumanity to leave her, after his many promises of protection. She even made a merit of prevailing with her mother to let her stay in the house, and by her artful insinuations, raised the resentment of the forlorn Cleora to nearly the pitch of her own. She even bantered his pretence of conscience, as a stale artifice to conceal a dislike to her person; and what theme is so proper to blow up the passion, of a slighted woman? It had its effect, and she found the greatest ease she was capable of, in contrivances of vengeance against the perfidious hypocrite, which was the appellation her fury gave Trueman. In the midst of her schemes, and those of the spiteful Dorothy, which was the name of the woman who had been Miss Symonds's maid, a letter from Trueman, which enclosed a note of fifty pounds, which he returned as what was her due, for that she had lent him, gave a new turn to her passions.

This letter seemed to be dictated by a sincere and honest friendship; but contained not one word of love; and indeed, the news Trueman had heard, just before he wrote it; filled his heart with too-much of that affection for another, for him to feel a soft thought for the unfortunate Cleora.

C H A P XII.

Mr. Trueman hears that he is still dear to Miss Peggy; but a letter from his friend Stewart throws a damp on all his hopes.

MR. Trueman, soon after he had sent the first letter to Cleora, set out for Yorkshire, and according to his promise, taking the house of Mrs. Hopkins in his way, he was by the honest widow conducted to Mrs. Saunders, whom he congratulated on her change of fortune, with that cordiality that gives a greater pleasure to the mind than all the forms and professions of ceremony. The lady, pleased at the share he seemed to take in her happiness, hastened to enquire into his situation,

ation, that she might, in her turn, rejoice with him in the satisfaction she believed she should give him in letting him know, how dear he still was to his agreeable Peggy. She began by telling him, that if she was to give ear to what she had heard she should return his compliment, and wish him joy; but as he had not thought proper, to let her know his change of condition, she would not be so impertinent as to seem to be acquainted with what he wished her ignorant of. ‘I hardly understand you, Madam,’ he replied; ‘but if I am to believe that you have heard I am married, I assure you, it is entirely false. I never had a serious thought of spending my life with any woman since I have been unhappy enough to lose the heart of Miss Williams.’ ‘If I thought you in earnest,’ returned the lady, ‘I would make you my confidant, and shew you two or three letters, that might alter your opinion of my friend Peggy, and let you see more reason for her resentment against you, than you imagine.’ Mr. Trueman replied, with a sigh, that he had nothing to reproach her with, and wished her every happiness she was capable of enjoying. ‘You are grown very cool,’ answered Mrs. Saunders, a little angry at his want of curiosity; ‘I am almost afraid you are like too many of your sex, and accuse Miss Williams, to hide your own inconstancy. I have a good mind to punish you, by keeping my letters to myself.’ ‘If they only contain the reasons my Peggy gives for her ceasing to love me,’ he replied a little moved; ‘I am enough sensible of my own want of merit, to justify her, without vindication. I own myself unworthy of her, and will acquiesce in whatever contributes to her happiness, without murmuring.’ ‘The dejection of your look,’ rejoined Mrs. Saunders, ‘but ill agrees with these resolutions. I dare say if I was to tell you, Miss Williams was married, it would put your heart in a strange flutter.’ ‘Very likely, madam, it might,’ he returned; ‘but I should do all in my power to conceal my uneasiness, and sincerely wish her that bliss and satisfaction her merit deserves, and which I am sure will never fall

‘fall to my lot to taste with any other woman.’
‘Well, well,’ said the lady, ‘you may set your mind
‘at rest. My friend is full as sensible of your merit as
‘you are of her’s, and perhaps could partake of as
‘little happiness with another as your self.’ ‘Then
‘why has she so cruelly abandoned me?’ he answered,
sighing: ‘I then did not deserve her hatred.’ ‘I
‘have offered to shew you her vindication,’ replied
Mrs. Saunders; ‘but you seem inclined to wish her
‘guilty.’ ‘No, madam,’ he returned warmly, ‘I
‘would give the world to purchase my Peggy’s love;
‘and though I despair of that, I should be glad for
‘her own sake to be informed, that she did not slight
‘my affection from a wanton levity; since such a dis-
‘position would keep her from ever enjoying solid
‘happiness.’ ‘I tell you,’ said Mrs. Saunders, ‘she
‘does not slight your love; she has a heart as warm
‘and tender as your own, and would, if she was not
‘restrained by the rules of her sex, and her belief that
‘you are married, have made you acquainted with
‘her sentiments.’ ‘Her belief that I am married!
‘who could tell her such a falsehood?’ he returned
with some warmth. ‘I was but four days in Lon-
‘don, and in that time I saw not one person that was
‘at all acquainted with Miss Williams.’ ‘I know not
‘who it was told her,’ replied the lady; ‘but I
‘think by your behaviour it is not much to her, whe-
‘ther the news be true or false.’ ‘O, madam! he
‘answered,’ you wrong the sensations of my heart, if
‘you believe it is indifferent to me what Miss Williams
‘thinks of me: for though I resolved never more to
‘mention her name, and to keep my self for ever
‘from her sight, as I had lost all hopes of reconcilia-
‘tion, shew me but that the dear creature does not
‘despise me, that she is sensible she has treated me ill,
‘and repents her cruelty, and I’ll fly to assure her,
‘that she is still as dear to me as ever.’ This is as it
‘should be,’ returned Mrs. Saunders, smiling at his
emotion. ‘You are now fit to be informed of the hap-
‘piness that is in your power; I am obliged to leave
‘you for a short time, but these papers will amuse you
‘in

'in my absence.' She then gave him two or three of the letters she had received from Miss Peggy, particularly that in which she vindicates herself, and expresses her despair.

At her return Mrs. Saunders found Trueman still reading; but to her surprise, she saw on his countenance none of those signs of joy she expected: a settled gloom still remained on his features. On her entrance he endeavoured to assume a more chearful aspect; but still talked of his journey into Yorkshire; in reality, his fatal engagement with Cleora, threw a damp over all his prospects. Had he believed his Peggy true but six days sooner, he would not have fallen a prey to the accusation of his own mind, or have felt the humbling fear of a revengeful woman. Mrs. Saunders remarked his absence of mind, and was too much displeased at his reserve to attempt to alter his resolution of leaving the Grove the next day. Before he set out, he received his notes from the lady, and sent the supply mentioned above to the distressed Cleora.

During his journey, his mind was torn by a variety of contending passions: he loved his Peggy, yet had entered into a criminal amour with a married woman. How could he appear before her, if she should ever be made acquainted with his fault: and if his still supporting this woman should be known, he was sensible, that whatever was his motive, it would be imputed to him as criminal, yet to abandon her would be the utmost cruelty. Fatal effects of a faulty indulgence! while he had no guilt he dreaded no discovery, and knew not a human face he could not have looked at without dismay. When he left France it was rather in compliance with the advice of his friend Mr. Stewart, than from the dictates of his own mind, which led him to brave a law-suit; however, notwithstanding all his perturbation of mind, he felt real and sincere delight when he remembered, that he was still dear to the lovely Peggy. He determined to stay no longer in the country than was just necessary to put an end to the affairs that required his presence, but to hasten to town, and secure

cure his happiness. Empty hope, that only served to render his disappointment the more shocking!

When he came, to his estate he amused himself a few days in giving orders to make such improvements as he thought would be most acceptable to his destined wife, whom he had not the least doubt of bringing down with him in a short time. He had sent word to Mr. Stewart of his intention of settling in the country, and heard news from that gentleman, that gave him great uneasiness, though in the near prospect of his enjoying all he wished. This was, that Cleora's husband was released from prison, and was hastening to London, in order to call him to an account for ravishing from him his wife, whose elopement and disguise had been discovered by accident, and was believed to be his contrivance. Mr. Stewart advised him to stand trial with him if he was conscious of his own innocence, since in England he ran not the least danger from the law, except actual adultery could be proved against him, 'a crime,' continued his friend, 'which however fashionable, all nations agree, deserves to be punished with severity; but of which, I dare say, Mr. Trueman is intirely free, whatever other imprudences, pity for a distressed woman may have made him commit.'

This confidence in his virtue was a dagger to the mind of Trueman, who knew how little he deserved it; he heaved a deep sigh, and then burst out, 'Good God! must I, for the transport of a loose hour, live a lie? must I be base enough to persist in my innocence? must I suffer an hireling to plead my cause, when I know myself guilty, yet if I own my guilt, I hazard more than life, I hazard the affection of my Peggy, whose purity will despise me; nay, perhaps, I hazard the very means of supporting her. Dreadful alternative! yet sure I owe something to the reputation of Cleora; if I accuse myself, I bring on her infamy and reproach; an ungrateful return for tenderness and affection!'

This consultation with himself gave him very little relief, and his distress was considerably increased by the

the answer he received from Cleora. She, indeed, thanked him for returning her the fifty pound she had lent him, but reproached him with falsehood and hypocrisy, and accused him with a settled design to rob her of her innocence and then to leave her. These accusations very much lessened his esteem for this unfortunate woman; he had hoped he should have been able, by his arguments, to have restored her to a just sense of the enormity of a guilty attachment; but this appearance of resentment quashed all these hopes, and he even hesitated whether the wild irregularity of this woman's passions, would not justify his entirely forsaking; however, he determined once more to write to her, and to send her for the last time, a sum of money that would enable her to live a long time without more remittances. She let him know, in her answer to this letter, that she had reason to believe she should soon see her brother, who in a few weeks, was expected in town; but she added, 'If I was happy in my Trueman's love, how gladly would I fly the face of every relation. My husband is my aversion and dread. Save me, save me from his power: but alas! I am acquainted with a stronger motive for your dislike to my person, than your pretended religious qualms: Miss Williams, hypocrite, is the deity you adore. I have certain intelligence where to find her; and if I am to be forsaken, I have vengeance in my power; for these eyes shall never see you another's till I have tried all my skill to prevent it.'

Is there a wretch more to be pitied than he who is under apprehensions of justly becoming an object of hatred to them he fondly loves? This was very likely to be poor Trueman's case, if the angry Cleora should do as she threatened. Filled with this fear he was obliged to sooth the passions of this desperate woman; he wrote her, contrary to his first intention, a third letter, in which he promised to see her in a short time. Alarmed for his dearest interest, he followed this epistle directly, and only paid a visit at the Grove in his way to town. He arrived there the very day Miss Williams had sent her friend an account of her coming to the knowledge

knowledge of her being Mrs. Goodwin's daughter; but had desired her to conceal her change of circumstances from Trueman, as that lady had mentioned, in her last letter to Miss Williams, the gloom and reserve that sat on his features, after he had heard of her still having a regard for him.

Mrs. Saunders, in order that Trueman might be more open, gave him an account of the several circumstances that preceded her marriage; but this confidence was without effect; he still continued reserved and melancholy: when Miss Williams was mentioned, he for a moment seemed to forget every misfortune; but a sigh constantly succeeded a smile of pleasure. The lady was extremely at a loss to guess the motive of his chagrin; but good manners obliged her not to be importunate in her inquiries into its cause, and he left her house without disclosing the secret.

C H A P. XIII.

Mr. Trueman is arrested at the suit of Cleora's husband; the spiteful Dorothy takes this opportunity to injure him with his mistress.

TRUEMAN's first visit, on his arrival in town, was paid to Cleora; but how extreme was his astonishment, on finding her husband with her? He was seen, and he determined not to fly. The gentleman, on his part, glad at having his prey thus fall unexpectedly in his way, with a haughty brow, asked his business with his wife, and vowed revenge. Trueman, conscious that more than appearances were against him, let him rave without returning the insult, and only called on Cleora, to justify him in regard to his innocence, as to any design of bringing her from France, or his knowing any thing of her disguise till they were within forty miles of Calais.

This vindication was of very little service to him; for the pretended enraged husband had certain intelligence that his wife was supported at Trueman's expence. The malicious Dorothy had no sooner found
that

that she had it in her power to do greater hurt to Trueman, by espousing the cause of this man than by interesting herself in the concerns of his unhappy wife, than she forgot all her vows of friendship, and betrayed to him the secrets with which she had been intrusted. He had heard from the milliner where to find Cleora; and on his first coming had shewed all the signs of the most violent rage: but the cunning Dorothy found means to pacify his anger, by letting him see how much his interest was concerned in behaving with moderation, and seeking no other redress than what he might hope to receive from the law. He even, by the advice of this hellish agent, offered to be reconciled to his wife, on condition of her betraying Trueman, purposing to make a handle of her confession against his antagonist. But here his artifice failed him. The lady could by no means be brought to accuse herself. She even called on Trueman to justify her innocence, while he, oppressed with the accusations of his own mind, made so lame a defence, that Cleora, provoked at what she thought meanness of soul, tho' it was in reality the natural consequence of unallowed guilt, exclaimed bitterly against them both, and accused them of a combination to destroy her reputation. She had not the least notion, that the deceitful Dorothy had betrayed her to her husband; but when the barbarous wretch confirmed before her face, what she had told her in secret, all her courage forsook her. To whom could she turn for consolation? she had disoblighed Trueman by threatening to betray him to his mistress, and in this moment, when her guilt and fears rendered her almost incapable of reflection, she confessed her weakness, and by that means put it into her husband's power to ruin Trueman.

They parted, but as Cleora's husband was an artful man, and had great interest in finding him, he was watched by his emissaries, and was actually seized by an officer the next day, when he was posting to the house of Mr. le Brun, full of the hopes of being reconciled to his dear mistress, to whom he had determined to own his fault, and the consequences he dreaded from the

the resentful husband ; for, fondly as he still loved, he chose rather to run the hazard of losing her than to deceive her by false appearances.

He was in sight of the door, at which stood a footman, when he was seized by the fellow, who rudely asked, if his name was not Joshua Trueman ? He answered that it was, and desired not to be exposed in the street, at the same time giving the officer money, which procured him more ceremony. The name reached the ears of Mrs. Goodwin's servant ; he had heard it frequently mentioned in the family, and had been told several particulars concerning the person who owned it, by a young woman who was his fellow-servant : this girl waited on Mrs. Goodwin, and was a little jealous of the favours that lady had conferred on Peggy Williams, and her being constantly about her mistress's person, made it almost impossible she should be quite ignorant of what had been so frequently the subject of conversation : the concern that was visible in Peggy's whole behaviour, on several occasions in which they had heard his name repeated, together with the message that had been sent to the tavern, all concurred to excite the curiosity of the servants, about what was endeavoured to be concealed from them with the greatest care.

The footman no sooner heard the name, than he ran in to inform Mrs. Bridget of what he had seen, when she, eager to have it in her power to mortify Miss Peggy, whom she had looked upon as a kind of rival, ever since she had been told that the woman who died in the workhouse was her mother, enquired of the people who were still talking of the poor gentleman's misfortune, where the officers were carrying him : but she could get no answer to her question, till a woman pretty well dressed asked, if she was acquainted with the gentleman that was seized by the officers, adding, his name is Trueman. The girl told her that she had never seen him ; but if it was Mr. Trueman, she thought he was her mistress's acquaintance. ‘ I wonder, says she, what has happened to him ; for by what I have heard our folks say, he has a good estate in York-shire.’

‘shire.’ ‘It is the same then,’ replied the communicative gentlewoman; ‘but I am afraid he is in a fair way to be stripped of it, were it twice as much.’ This naturally led to an enquiry into Trueman’s affairs, which the stranger seemed well acquainted with: she exposed the whole of Cleora’s misfortune, and after exclaiming bitterly against Trueman’s wickedness, artfully asked the young woman, in what family she lived: but she no sooner mentioned the name of her lady, than the woman put on a look of vexation, accused herself with folly in being so open to a stranger, and begged her to keep what she had told her a secret, since if it came to the ears of Miss Williams, who, she had heard, lived with Mrs. Goodwin, it would give her the greatest affliction. This woman’s mentioning Peggy procured her an invitation into the house, the mistress of which was still in the country: with this invitation she readily complied, and gratified the low pride of Mrs. Goodwin’s maid, by reciting many things of the absent Peggy, that she fancied brought her nearer her own level. But, lest my readers should be in pain to know who this woman was, I take this opportunity to inform them, that it was the malevolent Dorothy, who had herself watched Trueman, and resolved at once to do him all the mischief in her power: she knew, without asking, whose servant she was talking to, but thought she should be most likely to hear the concerns of the family by appearing a stranger: her conjecture did not deceive her; the girl who served Mrs. Goodwin described the tears and melancholy of Miss Peggy in such strong colours, that the cunning Dorothy found she should stand in need of all her art entirely to root from the affections of the young lady the favoured lover. As Mrs. Goodwin was expected in town the next day, Dorothy gave an invitation to her new acquaintance Mrs. Bridget, to come to see her at her mother’s, in hopes of hearing from her the effects of her malicious scheme.

C H A P. XIV.

Trueman, is a little relieved by the unexpected assistance of an old friend, but can't be prevailed on to stand on his defence, at the expence of truth and his conscience.

I Left poor Trueman in such disagreeable hands, that I imagine my readers, notwithstanding his guilty weakness, are in pain for him. He was once more in danger of a prison, as he knew none in town to whom he thought proper to apply for bail. But a countryman, inquiring into the cause of the gentleman's being used so roughly, was answered by the officer's assistant, 'No great matter, master, only a pretty lady has made a cuckold of her husband, and he has a mind to gild his horns at the expence of her partner.' 'Is that all?' replied the man. 'I was once in danger of a prison myself on almost the same account; I'll try to serve the gentleman.' He then made his way through the crowd to Trueman, and whispered him to see the officer, that he might have time to recollect himself, and to send for his friends. The first was already done, and as to the last, Trueman told the stranger, that he lived in Yorkshire, and had no acquaintance in London. The countryman solemnly swore he had, and one that would serve him at the expence of his life, and then, with a hearty shake by the hand, bid him recollect his old companion Joe Williams.

My reader must remember that Trueman, in the detail of his life, had told Mr. le Brun of his lending a trifle to a young fellow of that name: he had not seen him since till this minute, and as he was grown prodigiously fat, he was entirely out of his remembrance. The appearance of this man gave Trueman no great prospect of advantage from his friendship; but the frank manner in which he offered it, gave him a right to his thanks. He asked the fellows who had taken him, as soon as they were in a tavern, to be left alone with

with his friend. This favour was granted, after the room was examined, and found to be a place of security. Mr. Williams the contryman began the conversation by pulling from his pocket a leathern bag, and putting it into Trueman's hand, saying at the same time, 'You lent me, when I was distressed, two guineas; it was more to you then, than this two hundred is to me now. Take my purse, and use it freely: ingratitude is worse than the sin of witchcraft.'

Trueman returned it, and told his friend, that he was in no need of money. 'No need of money!' replied the man laughing, 'then what the devil do you do here, in the hands of bailiffs, with cash at command; bribe the fellows and make your escape.' Mr. Trueman replied, that his antagonist had seen him taken, and he was sure he would not let him escape; 'besides,' said he, 'I had rather know the worst, than live always in the dread of it. What a pox,' said Williams, 'thou art as down in the mouth as if thou hadst committed murder; I'll go and offer my bag to the cuckold himself: I warrant he won't refuse it. Where can I find him?' Mr. Trueman, in spite of his perplexity, could not help laughing at the eager gratitude of his old friend, whom he had much ado to persuade from enquiring of the officers where he might meet with their employer; who, for his part, did not think the chastity of any woman in England worth two hundred pounds: however, when Trueman mentioned this unlucky affair as a matter of importance, that might perhaps reduce him to beggary, the honest countryman was as warm as ever in his offers of assistance and friendship, and actually, by his influence, or rather that of his leathern bag, procured him a couple of housekeepers to be bail for his appearance, and by that means released him from durance.

His first care, after he was at liberty, was to seek an attorney of reputation; and he was recommended to a man of great account in his profession. The gentleman first asked if he was innocent of what the plaintiff accused him of; when Truman hesitating for a reply,
the

the attorney said, his next question must be to know if his adversary had any witnesses that could hurt him; if he had, he said, it must be his principal care to buy off their evidence; and when that was done, he told him, he could procure him a counsellor, whose eloquent tongue never moved for a cause, and lost it. 'Then, I suppose, answered Trueman, he never engages without a strict examination into the merit of the cause he pleads for, since the eloquence of a Tully, one would think, should not have power to baffle positive proofs, in the opinion of an impartial jury.' It is our business, replied the attorney, 'to prepare the briefs for the counsel in such a manner as is most for the advantage of our client; we have no occasion to mention any thing that will be urged on the other side, except to guard against its effects; so most claims appear just to the counsel, who are paid for pleading, and never make it their concern on which side the truth lies; if they have the reputation of gaining the cause, the more difficulty the more glory is the maxim of most of them; and as it requires much more art to confound truth than to discover it, I cannot help thinking the great man I mean, owes his reputation to his ready wit and talent at repartee, as much as to the probity of his clients.'

'Ready wit!' returned Trueman. 'what has wit to do with the decision of right and wrong? must an innocent man lose his cause for a jest, in a land where the laws are our boast? for my part, I'll never defend what is wrong, at the expence of truth, nor hire others to do it for me.' The attorney, who began to think Trueman a little crazed, asked him very gravely, what then was his business with him. To which he answered, he had been informed that the lady's husband had another wife, and he wanted to know, if his being married before, would not take from him the power of calling him to an account for any thing that had passed between him and Cleora, who, according to law, could not be his wife, if he had another? The attorney told him as that was an affair cognizable in another court, it could not at all affect this cause, and
again

again advised him to stand in his own defence ; adding, for his encouragement, that nothing but positive proof could hurt him, as an expert counsellor would put an unexpected good face on such as was only circumstantial. Mr. Trueman, however could not be prevailed on by his arguments to think it at all lawful to reward another for doing what he durst not do himself, and he saw very little difference between disguising the truth, by specious pretences, and absolutely denying it. 'Tis true he had more than life at stake, as he believed the interest of his heart depended on that of his fortune ; but this consideration, though it pierced his soul, was not of force sufficient to stagger his resolution of acting for the future so as to secure the peace of his own mind, and the placid serenity of an approving conscience. His scruples were bantered by his friend the countryman ; but as he found he could not remove them, he advised him to come to some terms of composition with Cleora's husband, who he supposed would be satisfied with a sum of money. Trueman agreed to this proposal, which, reasonable as it was, gave his adversary the better handle to hurt him ; for base minds always believe others actuated by motives like their own. The husband of Cleora imagined this offer a certain sign of his own success, and refused, with haughtiness, notes to the value of five hundred pounds to drop the affair.

The hopes that Trueman had of putting an end to his perplexity made him defer his visit to Miss Williams, tho' he longed to see and be reconciled to her : this delay was of very unhappy consequences to them both.

C H A P. XV.

A reconciliation and an old man's narrative.

THE ladies returned from the country, and as Miss Peggy was still esteemed only a dependant on Mrs. Goodwin, who had not yet acknowledged her for her daughter, Mrs. Bridget, full of her news, uttered

tered all she had learned of Trueman's unhappy circumstances, without the least precaution. Her intelligence, as it made a visible alteration in the complexion of Miss Peggy, met with a severe reprimand from Mrs. Goodwin. This stopped her tongue, but it increased her desire of knowing more, and perhaps hastened the return of her visit to the communicative Dorothy. By her she was informed of the application that had been made to the injured husband, and of his scorning the proposals offered. This Bridget took care to remember, though she feared her lady's anger too much to speak of it before her; but she did not fail of being in a talking humour to her fellow-servants, whenever she thought Miss Peggy was within hearing; and Trueman's being in danger of beggary from the resentment of the lady's husband who came with him from France, and lived with him in such a street, was more than once the subject of a loud-whispered secret.

While the amiable Peggy was made miserable by the gossiping spite of this girl, Mrs. Goodwin had her thoughts taken up in contriving the means of knowing whether her spouse still loved her; she wrote to her brother le Brun to desire him to send to town Mr. Williams, without acquainting him that it was at her desire he was sent. Her husband himself brought the answer to this letter, and, according to the scheme concerted between Mrs. Goodwin and her daughter, he was not suffered to see the lady of the house till he was prepared by Peggy. When the fond embraces that passed between her and her father, whom she had not seen for several months, were at an end, she begged to know, if she might not be acquainted to whom she owed the obedience of a child. Her father answered, with a sigh, that he had in vain endeavoured to find what was become of her mother. 'I left her,' said he, 'I cruelly left her, and providence will not suffer me to have the consolation of seeing her again. A person whom I employed to search for her in Paris, has only been able to learn that she was many years in a convent; but on inquiry, none of the nuns recollected they had ever had such a boarder. I am sure,'
he

he continued, ' I saw the dear creature pass our lodgings in a chariot, a short time after I was released from my imprisonment. Would to heaven some happy chance would bring her again to my view, though stripped of all the advantages I fancied, by her appearance, she was possessed of.' ' If my mother was so dear to you,' said Peggy, ' how came you to leave her ?' ' Strange as it may appear,' answered Mr. Williams, ' many years of absence have not been capable of tearing her from my heart. My fondness for you was the first cause of my leaving her.' ' I the cause of your abandoning my mother !' answered Miss Peggy, involved in new astonishment, ' dear Sir, you'll make me abhor myself.' ' 'Tis a mystery, my dear,' returned Mr. Williams, ' that I have at present no time to clear up. I have Mr. le Brun's orders to deliver this letter into his sister's own hands, and I impatiently long to render my thanks to the dear lady who has heaped blessings on us both.' Miss Peggy replied, he should be admitted to Mrs. Goodwin presently ; but in the mean time he might send in her letter by a person whom she would call to him. She went to the door of the room, but had no need to exalt her voice, her she wanted stood in the entry : it was Mrs. Goodwin herself, who had not been able to suppress the eager desire she had to behold her husband ; her daughter's coming was a relief she stood in great need of ; for she could hardly restrain herself from joining in the tender embrace to which she was witness ; and when her husband talked of her with tenderness, a suffusion of tears almost marred her counterfeiting ; however she dried her eyes, and went up to her husband, as if to take the letter : she was in the habit of a menial servant ; but Mr. Williams had scarce lifted his eyes to her face, which, in spite of all her endeavours to the contrary, was afresh bathed in tears, than the letter dropped from his hand, and he cried in a tone of extasy, ' Heaven, indulgent heaven, has heard my prayers, and restored to me my dear Margaretta.'

A long and extatic silence followed, which neither Mrs. Goodwin nor her dear Peggy were able to inter-

rupt. The first was weeping with her head reclined on her husband's neck, in an agitation too great for words, while he held her in his arms with all the marks of the most passionate fondness.

On their first recovering the use of speech, which was not for some minutes, what they said was rendered incoherent by a repetition of fond caresses and endearments. It was with visible dissatisfaction that Mr. Williams recollected, that the duties of his place obliged him to be separated from his dear wife; and in order that the lady in whose house he had found her, and to whom he thought her a servant, might have the letter he brought, he begged her to deliver it, and return to him immediately. His Peggy, dear as she was to him, was entirely forgot, or she very probably would have been appointed the messenger. Mrs. Goodwin took the letter from him, broke the seal and was going to look over the contents, when her husband, believing that the flutter of her spirits was the occasion of this inadvertency, begged her to remember it was her lady's letter, and came from Mr. le Brun. She returned, with a smile, that she read all the letters that were directed to Mrs. Goodwin, and was not afraid of her anger. 'But, my dear,' she continued, 'why should I keep you in suspense? I am that Mrs. Goodwin to whom you think your self so much obliged; I only made this little trial of your affection, lest I afterwards should fancy my fortune had any share in my recovering your heart.' 'You, Mrs. Goodwin,' replied Mr. Williams, 'by what strange fatality has change of names concealed us from each other! Has another partner given you that of Goodwin? Oh, ease my fears; I have nothing to reproach you with if it is so.'

Mrs. Goodwin answered very gravely, she believed a guilty attachment had some share in his altering his name; but, for her part, as she had never ceased to love him, she had never entertained the thought of another man. 'I take shame to myself,' replied Mr. Williams, 'that I can't consistent with truth, make a profession of the same purity; but I assure you, my
dear,

‘ dear, Williams is my real name, and I should never
 ‘ have gone by any other, if I had not been obliged to
 ‘ conceal myself from the vengeance of an unjust ene-
 ‘ my. When I returned to England, I found the occa-
 ‘ sion of my fears was removed ; but my impatience
 ‘ to know by what chance you, who I believe have had
 ‘ no youthful follies to expose you to any one’s resent-
 ‘ ment should be obliged to use the same deceit, prevents
 ‘ me from giving you my story.’ Mrs. Goodwin answer-
 ed, that she had used no deceit, nor had ever assumed
 a name that she did not think she had a right to :
 ‘ While I believed my self the daughter of Captain dea-
 ‘ Launey,’ she continued, ‘ I was called by his name,
 ‘ but as soon as I knew he was not my father, I resign-
 ‘ ed it for that of Goodwin, as my Aunt Isaacs insisted
 ‘ on my not going by yours.’ She then related to her
 husband in what manner she learnt the news of Mr.
 Goodwin’s being her father ; and when she had con-
 cluded her relation, she wished him to be as explicit in
 regard to his, as she hoped whatever he might have had,
 he had now no occasion for concealments.

He replied, that it was possible his confessing his
 faults might lessen him in her esteem ; ‘ but, my dear,
 ‘ said he, I have suffered too dearly already for deceiv-
 ‘ ing you, ever to do it again. You know the difficulty
 ‘ I had to persuade you to become mine ; you know
 ‘ the opposition that was made to my wishes, both by
 ‘ your mother and aunt. Had I told you the name
 ‘ of Hutchinson was a feigned one, and assumed only
 ‘ to conceal me from a man that pursued me with the
 ‘ bitterest malice, I must also have informed you
 ‘ of the cause of his anger. This I knew would be the
 ‘ way to be for ever separated from what was now be-
 ‘ come most dear to me ; since I had heard you protest,
 ‘ if you were unhappy enough to like a man whom
 ‘ you afterwards found had debauched another woman,
 ‘ you would tear him from your heart, and never see
 ‘ him more. I dreaded this protestation, since my be-
 ‘ ing charged with a crime of this kind had obliged me
 ‘ to abandon my native country.

' I lost my father when I was an infant, but my mother took all possible care of my education, and when
 ' I was of proper age, I was put apprentice to a wine merchant. What was given with me was almost the
 ' whole I received of what my father left, tho' I ought to have had near a thousand pounds; but my mother
 ' married a young man, after having lived a widow fourteen years, and he quickly dissipated her substance. She died with grief before I was out of my
 ' time, when I had no resource but the generosity of my master, who provided me with every necessary, though he was under no engagement to do so. When
 ' my seven years were expired, I still served him; and was by him sent into Italy to transact business: there
 ' I continued several years, always behaving so as to give my master satisfaction. I had many opportunities of advancing myself; but as I depended on being left in my master's business at his decease, I neglected them. When I returned to England I brought
 ' with me to my master's house, a boy and girl, the children of his sister, who had married an Italian Gentleman: the young lady was near fifteen, her brother about twelve; I was pleased with the honour of
 ' this charge, as it shewed a considerable confidence; I treated them both with the greatest respect, and they, in return, spoke of me to their uncle with the
 ' utmost kindness. I had been between two or three years in London, since my return, and thought myself greatly esteemed by my master: Miss Dumello, the lady I brought from Italy, boarded at our
 ' house; she had a very fine person, a lively wit, and was in reality a reigning toast; her uncle had
 ' no children, and it was believed that she and her brother would inherit his fortune, which was very
 ' considerable. In this situation she did not want admirers; her beauty and accomplishments gave her so
 ' high an opinion of herself, that she rejected many good offers.

' I had not the least affection for her, inconsistent with the most disinterested friendship. A wanton air of levity ran through her whole behaviour, which no

man

' man of sense could approve in a wife ; for the sudden
 ' transition from the close confinement she had suffered
 ' in her father's house, to the unlimited liberty she en-
 ' joyed in her uncle's family, almost turned her brain,
 ' and rendered her one of the gayest and most thought-
 ' less creatures living : plays, assemblies, masquerades,
 ' and the whole round of fashionable diversions took
 ' up her time ; but her reputation still remained un-
 ' touched. Her uncle made her many remonstrances
 ' on the imprudence of her conduct, and she as many
 ' promises to amend it ; but her prevailing bias for
 ' pleasure always got the better of her resolution. One
 ' night she had a ticket given her for the masquerade ;
 ' she could not resist the temptation, but went ; my
 ' master at the same time believing that she was gone to
 ' his country-house. The next day, I was told by one
 ' of the maids that she did not return home till five in
 ' the morning, when she appeared extremely dejected
 ' and thoughtful. From this time I observed that she
 ' frequently threw herself in my way, talked to me with
 ' the utmost freedom and affability, and always ap-
 ' peared pleased with my conversation. I was turned
 ' of thirty, and she not quite seventeen, yet she found
 ' the courage to offer me her hand. I could not help
 ' being surprised at so unexpected a proposal ; and af-
 ' ter some hesitation told her, that my obligations to
 ' her uncle forbade my doing any thing that would give
 ' him displeasure. She ridiculed my scruples, redoubled
 ' her assiduity to please me, and one night even came
 ' undressed to my bed. Forgive me, my dear, while I
 ' confess that not all my resolution would have enabled
 ' me to overcome this temptation, as she was a lovely
 ' woman, if her uncle had not almost in the same in-
 ' stant entered the room. I had considered him as my
 ' benefactor, and patron, as a person to whom I was
 ' under great obligations, and on whom I founded all
 ' my future hopes ; I was therefore struck with con-
 ' fusion, and scarcely able to look him in the face ;
 ' but while he reproached me with ingratitude for se-
 ' ducing her youth, she on her side, to my utter asto-
 ' nishment, was so far from asserting my innocence,

that she made no attempt to vindicate her own ; but
had the assurance to propose my marrying her to save
her reputation. Her confidence, and the appearances
that were against me, prevented my saying any thing
in my own justification. I was perfectly innocent of
any premeditated criminal intention ; but yet had not
the courage to give a lady the lie, or to tell her uncle
that she came uninvited. The old gentleman at first
stormed most furiously, but grew calm by degrees,
and at last yielded to the intreaties of the young lady.
I was not, it is true, much in love with her ; but as I
had soon my master's consent, and was fully persuaded
that she had the greatest tenderness for me, I made
no objection to the proposal ; I accounted for the indecency
of her behaviour, from the extravagance of her passion ; I pitied her, and resolved as much as it
was in my power to render her happy. But while the
preparations were making for our nuptials, and my
coming in partner with my master, my fellow-clerk
told me in confidence, that she was with child, and
on my threatening him in high terms, in defence of
the honour of my future spouse, he let me know that
he once intended to have asked his master's permission
to have paid his addresses to her ; but the levity of her
conduct deterred him ; yet as he had some inclination
to her person, he determined to try if she was not to
be reclaimed, and often took care that her uncle
should be informed of all the irregularities of her behaviour : but as, in spite of his remonstrances, she
continued to keep late hours, and to be for ever abroad,
he resolved to know what were her attachments. He learnt from her maid that she was one
night to be at the masquerade ; that she had a ticket
sent her by a young nobleman, and what were the
dresses that were to be worn both by the lady and his
lordship ; for these particulars were too flattering to
the vanity of the young lady to be concealed. On
being furnished with this intelligence he procured a
domine, like that of the young nobleman, her lover,
and a dress like her own for a female companion. In
short, he followed her thither, and was so lucky as to
pass

‘pass upon her for the man of quality : when, to his
 ‘great surprize, the lady lost all regard for decency,
 ‘behaved with the looseness of a prostitute, and before
 ‘they parted told his supposed lordship, that she be-
 ‘lieved herself with child, and even gloried in a
 ‘contrivance she had formed of marrying one of her
 ‘uncle’s clerks.

‘The next day, he said, she received a letter from
 ‘the nobleman himself, which he supposed was to take
 ‘leave of his fickle mistress, who he probably believed
 ‘had jilted him by design. She appeared extremely
 ‘thoughtful and uneasy : however her chagrin did not
 ‘make her forget her cunning ; for she put every art in
 ‘practice to bring to her lure the person who gave me
 ‘this relation ; but as she had herself put him on his
 ‘guard by owning her design, all her stratagems were
 ‘ineffectual.’

‘This relation abated my ardour for the match, yet
 ‘I could not prevail on my self to betray the secret, as
 ‘it might ruin a person whom I believed my friend.
 ‘While I was irresolute what steps to pursue to prevent
 ‘a union I dreaded, the lady’s condition was betrayed
 ‘to her uncle, on which she acknowledged her being
 ‘with child, and called me the father. The old gentle-
 ‘man, careful of the fame of his niece, was for having
 ‘us married directly : but this fresh baseness made me
 ‘throw off all reserve, and openly protest I never would
 ‘become her husband. My refusing to do what he
 ‘thought I in justice owed to the reputation of his
 ‘niece, made my master, from a sincere friend, become
 ‘my most bitter enemy ; while the young Italian dis-
 ‘appointed in her schemes, stimulated his revenge. I
 ‘found it impossible to live at peace in England, and
 ‘was once in the greatest danger of losing my life by
 ‘the hand of an assassin, who, I believed was hired by
 ‘the revengeful lady to kill me, since at the instant he
 ‘wounded me, he mentioned her name. As I saw that
 ‘I ran the greatest hazard while I continued within the
 ‘reach of her malice, I took the opportunity of the
 ‘report that was spread of my death, to make my es-
 ‘cape to Boulogne. Here I met with an English mer-
 ‘chant,

‘chant, to whom I ventured to tell my story, and was
‘by him recommended under a feigned name to a
‘banker in Paris. I need not tell you chance brought
‘you to my view while I was in this gentleman’s ser-
‘vice, nor describe the happiness I enjoyed, till our
‘religious bickerings destroyed all our bliss. I had
‘many debates with myself before I could conquer the
‘regret I felt at leaving you; but unhappily your mo-
‘ther’s fury got the better of all my tenderness. I
‘would not pain you by reflecting on her memory;
‘but she reproached me beyond all patience, and vow-
‘ed to take my little Peggy from my power, as soon
‘as she was capable of instruction, that I might not
‘destroy her soul by bringing her up in heresy. This
‘threat inspired me with the resolution of taking her
‘with me, if I could but persuade her nurse to be the
‘companion of my flight, which I did not despair of
‘doing, as her husband was dead, and I had often
‘heard her wish to be in England. She came very
‘readily into the proposal, sold off her few moveables,
‘and we set out together.* At first I had no design of
‘living with her as her husband; but her kindness to
‘the child, whom she suckled, made her agreeable to
‘me, and her nursing me in a fit of illness and doing
‘every little office for me with cheerfulness and alacrity,
‘and selling even her cloaths for my support, before I
‘durst venture to London, endeared her to me. I had
‘at that time no very high thoughts of the solemnity
‘of the conjugal vow on the side of the man, so it is
‘not to be wondered at that I infringed it. When I
‘came to town I found my master dead, and the per-
‘son who had made me his confidant in his business;
‘my Italian mistress was returned to Italy, after
‘having brought forth her first born about six
‘months after the commencement of our intimacy.
‘The birth of this child cleared me in my ma-
‘ster’s opinion, as I could not possibly be the
‘father, being engaged in business for him at a
‘considerable distance from him, till the young
‘lady must have been more than two month’s gone
‘with

' with child ; and to make me amends, for the
 ' injustice he had done me, he left me five hundred
 ' pounds, if ever I should be found. With this little
 ' sum I began trade, and was once in a great way of
 ' business ; I had a share in several vessels, some of
 ' which were unfortunately lost : this, as I traded prin-
 ' cipally on credit, threw my affairs into an irretrieva-
 ' ble disorder. The person to whom I owed the largest
 ' sum, was he who had been my fellow-clerk, who
 ' had been as successful as I had been unfortunate : he
 ' had always appeared my friend, and it was by his
 ' advice I left my family ; but alas ! I did not then
 ' think him the villain he afterwards appeared. In
 ' short, this man was Mr. Symonds, the wretch who,
 ' in league with the woman I called my wife, would
 ' have ruined my child. I went through many
 ' hardships, while I was abroad, which I always
 ' thought was a just retribution from heaven, for my
 ' cruelty in leaving you. I once formed a resolution
 ' of going to Paris to learn what was become of you ;
 ' but my indigence for some time prevented me, and
 ' I afterwards heard that you had been many years re-
 ' tired from the world. I stayed at Boulogne in extreme
 ' poverty, till I heard I might venture into England,
 ' under the protection of an act of insolvency. I was
 ' informed there of Mr. Symonds's having turned my
 ' daughter out of doors, and of her having been a ser-
 ' vant in a coffee-house. My own distresses were no-
 ' thing in comparison of what I felt for this dear girl,
 ' tho' I knew not half her misery. The person from
 ' whom I had this intelligence had been my acquaint-
 ' tance many years ; but I never felt half the love for
 ' him that I experienced the moment he told me he
 ' had given my poor distressed girl a guinea—' ' O,
 ' sir ! interrupted Peggy, he had no right to your gra-
 ' titude, for he would have reduced me far below the
 ' condition he found me in ; he would fain have had
 ' me for his mistress.'

Mr. Williams was extremely surprized to hear this
 character given of a man whom he had always thought
 his friend ; but he had been too guilty himself to be

very sharp in his invectives against the faults of others, so he only replied, ‘ It is fit, my dear, that every friend should deceive the man who abandons his wife, especially such a one as I left; but tho’ the whole world should deceive me, I can now be happy, since I am sure of thy friendship and consolation.’ Mrs. Goodwin returned no other answer than an affectionate embrace, and her spouse went on.

‘ It was from this man that I learnt where to direct to Peggy, whom I desired to meet me; I sent to an acquaintance of my supposed wife’s, that she might accompany my daughter; for I knew nothing of the hand she had in Symonds’s contrivances. They came to the place appointed; but not together: for unfortunately Peggy was, by the overturning of the coach she came in, some hours later than she would otherwise have been. While I was waiting for her with the utmost impatience, I saw her whom I called my wife enter the house: I was going to meet her, but the voice of Mr. Symonds prevented me. He was asking if the London coach was come in. I retired on hearing him speak, though I did not know I had any occasion for fear; but I chose to conceal from him my indignance, which but too plainly appeared in my dress. I had been several days at this inn, as I was rendered by sickness unable to travel, I went without observation up to my chamber, with an intent to wait there till Mr. Symonds should be gone.

‘ This room looked into a back field, where I beheld him in deep consultation with the ungrateful monster whom I had just before been going to meet. My blood boiled with indignation, to see her treat like a friend, the person who had behaved so unkindly to my Peggy, whom she always professed to love as well as if she had been her own child; but I had no time to make many reflections, for the hostler who belonged to the inn, came to me, and informed me he was sent to an officer by a gentleman, whom he had heard mention my name. “ I fancy master, said the fellow, it will be the best way for you to get out of his reach.” ‘ I took his advice, and
‘ after

‘ after having stripping myself of the little money I
 ‘ had, to discharge my reckoning, left the inn, uncertain
 ‘ what course to take to avoid Symonds, and yet see
 ‘ my daughter.

‘ I hid myself in an obscure lodging till next day,
 ‘ and was almost resolved to travel to London, with-
 ‘ out seeing Peggy ; but the uneasiness I thought she
 ‘ would feel on my account prevented me. I got a
 ‘ person, who was in the house with me to enquire
 ‘ what passengers came in the coach the preceding
 ‘ night, and heard that a young woman, who, by the
 ‘ description, I believed to be my girl, was amongst
 ‘ them, and that her mother who waited for her, had
 ‘ taken her away early in the morning. At this news
 ‘ I forgot myself ; my whole soul was agitated with
 ‘ the idea of the distress of my poor daughter, for the
 ‘ honest hostler who had warned me to escape, had
 ‘ mentioned that he heard Symonds say that imprison-
 ‘ ment would make me gladly comply with his wishes ;
 ‘ and this gave me the first hint of his having a design
 ‘ on the honour of my child.

‘ I now felt a detestation for the creature who had
 ‘ pretended the affection of a real mother, and saw
 ‘ at full view the enormity of my own guilt : but to
 ‘ succour or defend my poor, betrayed, helpless girl,
 ‘ was intirely out of my power. I was destitute of all
 ‘ means of support for myself, except an old watch,
 ‘ which I was now obliged to sell ; for that purpose, I
 ‘ went to a market-town, the place where I stayed at,
 ‘ being only a village ; I had lost all hopes of meeting
 ‘ with my daughter, but while I was in a goldsmith’s
 ‘ shop, I saw her go by with the woman I now ab-
 ‘ hored : Peggy looked as if she had been weeping.
 ‘ As I did not doubt but Symonds was not far off, I
 ‘ durst not appear, though I longed to embrace my
 ‘ poor girl, whom I had not seen for several years.
 ‘ I saw them enter an inn in sight of the shop where I
 ‘ was, and presently after saw Symonds alight at the
 ‘ door.

‘ His thus following her was to me a strong proof,
 ‘ that I was not mistaken, when I suspected him of
 ‘ base

base designs. I sauntered about the place, notwithstanding my own danger, waiting for an opportunity to inform my child of her's. At length, I for a trifle got to her hand a note that let her know where I was, and commanded her to steal from her mother, and come to me the first moment it was in her power. She obeyed me, and we were hastening through by-ways to London, when I unfortunately got a fall that bruised me violently, and for several days rendered me incapable of continuing my journey.

This delay dissipated the trifle I had obtained by selling my watch, and reduced us to great straits; however, I got well enough to travel slowly, and was in hopes of soon being out of the reach of my enemies; but one evening as we were entering our mean lodging, I had the glimpse of a woman who, I thought, resembled her I had suffered to be called by my name; but as she slipped out of my sight, I flattered myself with the hopes I was mistaken; but my daughter's fear made us set out very early next morning, and take the most unfrequented ways. All these precautions were without effect; for before noon I was accosted by an officer, who produced his authority from Symonds, and seemed resolutely bent on conveying me to the county jail. As I knew it would be in vain to contend with him, I made no resistance, and he was carrying me thither, followed by my child, who was all in tears, when Symonds appeared, and asked me if I had no proposals to make to him. I replied, unable to suppress my indignation, I would not owe my redemption from death itself to the loss of my Peggy's virtue. At this answer, he turned pale, but replied very calmly, that he had something to offer to me, and proposed to retire with me, in order to converse more at liberty among some trees that we saw at a distance, while the officer stayed with my wife and daughter: Peggy insisted on going with me, and we went, when he offered to allow me a genteel sufficiency for my own life, and to acquit me of all my obligations to him, if I would permit my child to become his mistress.

: Though

' Though he softened the horror of his proposal as much
 ' as possible, it was such a bare-faced affront, that I was
 ' scarce master of my reason. I gave him no answer,
 ' but called to the officer to let him know that I was
 ' ready to go with him, where-ever he thought proper
 ' to convey me. When I turned to Peggy, I beheld
 ' her weeping, and begging the vile Symonds not to
 ' kill her father. I rudely pulled her from him, and
 ' told her I was ashamed of her supplicating such a
 ' wretch : on this the officer and my wife came, ac-
 ' companied by two or three fellows, whom I had
 ' before seen loitering at a distance, watching the mo-
 ' tions of Symonds ; I upbraided her with barbarity
 ' and cruelty to me and my child ; when, without re-
 ' turning me any answer, she bid the men do as they
 ' were ordered : on which the officer and another fel-
 ' low seized me, while the remaining two laid hold on
 ' Peggy. She gave a violent shriek ; I rushed from
 ' the men who held me, to her rescue, on which they
 ' left her, and united their strength to carry a helpless
 ' old man to prison. My daughter gave another cry
 ' on my being torn from her, and fell without motion
 ' on the ground. Language is without the power of
 ' expressing what I felt at this distressful minute ; I
 ' dreaded the villain's making use of force, now she
 ' was in no condition to resist his brutality. Perhaps
 ' I should have known that my fears were but too justly
 ' founded, had not providence sent her a deliverer,
 ' who had the courage to vindicate her honour, tho'
 ' at the expence of his own liberty.'

Mr. Williams continued his narration ; but as the
 reader is already acquainted with the other particulars
 of his story, we shall not trespass upon his patience by
 a tiresome repetition.

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
J O S H U A T R U E M A N.
B O O K I V.
C H A P. I.

Miss Williams is importuned in vain to become the wife of a man of quality, which she refuses, and is made unhappy by the folly of Trueman.

AS Mrs. Goodwin's gratitude and esteem were raised for Trueman, on her hearing the repetition of the obligations he had conferred on her daughter, she was more than once tempted to speak in his behalf; but his false step with Cleora had reached her knowledge, from a less suspected tongue than Bridget's, and her fear of his future conduct kept her silent. Whether this silence was agreeable to Miss Peggy or not, it was certainly quite prudent in her mamma to observe it, at least before her; since no mother, who values the happiness of her child would knowingly turn advocate for one who had the character of a keeper. This was the light in which Trueman, by this time, appeared to Mrs. Goodwin.

The artful Dorothy had heard from Mrs. Goodwin's maid of the silence that was imposed on her by her mistress, in regard to Mr. Trueman; but that the good lady might not be ignorant of his folly, she sent,
by

by the penny post, an anonymous letter, in which were these words.

‘MADAM,
‘H^AVING heard that a young woman in whose
‘happinefs you interest yourself, and on whom
‘you have conferred great favours, is, or has been,
‘addressed to by Mr. Trueman, a man of some estate
‘in Yorkshire, I thought proper to acquaint you, that
‘notwithstanding his seeming virtue, he actually keeps
‘a mistress. Your own prudence will direct you how
‘to preserve the young lady, which is the only aim
‘of,

‘MADAM,

‘Your unknown humble servant.’

Mrs. Goodwin paid very little regard to this nameless epistle, and imagined it, as it really was, the work of some concealed enemy; but one day her maid having occasion for a scrap of paper for some use, pulled from her pocket a piece on which was some writing which Mrs. Goodwin thought resembled the hand in which the letter she had received was written. The girl was intirely ignorant of her mistress’s having had any intelligence from her friend, and very readily replied, on Mrs. Goodwin’s saying she believed she knew the hand, she thought she was mistaken, since it was part of a note she had received from an acquaintance, whose mother kept a lodging-house in such a part of the town, naming the street where Mrs. Goodwin had seen Trueman. The lady took no farther notice to her servant; but went to the house, as if to enquire for an apartment. Among other questions, she asked Dorothy, for it was she who shewed her the lodgings, if Mr. Trueman had not lately lived there? She replied, that he had had the very apartment they were then looking at. ‘How came he to leave it?’ returned Mrs. Goodwin; ‘for I hear he is now in town.’ ‘Why to tell you the truth, Madam,’ replied Dorothy, ‘he brought with him a lady that my mother
‘thought

‘ thought was his spouse ; but she proved afterwards
‘ to be only a mistress, and we don’t chuse to have our
‘ house discredited by such sort of people.’

The frankness of this woman made Mrs. Goodwin own the design on which she came, and this confession discovered to the cunning Dorothy who she was. Every art was now put in practice that could make Trueman appear odious : the disguise of Cleora was attributed to him ; her accidentally being found in his chamber at Paris, all were proofs of guilt, and indeed, as she dressed them up with many aggravating circumstances from her own wicked invention, such they appeared, even to the candid Mrs. Goodwin, who now believed herself obliged to combat her daughter’s inclinations by parental authority, if gentle persuasion was without effect.

This black intelligence was received but a day or two before the reconciliation took place, and as Mrs. Goodwin had thought it not proper to make Miss Peggy acquainted with her inquiries concerning her lover, the poor young lady every moment expected that her mamma would fulfil her promise, and say something in his behalf ; for as she did not know of her mother’s having received any other information than what she had learnt from the maid, which she very prudently seemed to discredit, she was far from believing her Trueman’s enemy, whatever reason she had herself to be so.

A heart in love loses one half of its resentment when others espouse its quarrel : very likely if Mrs. Goodwin had been a warm advocate with her husband for Mr. Trueman, his infidelity would have appeared in a much stronger light to the angry Peggy, than it did while he seemed so much neglected. She fancied this neglect was a punishment that ought, in some measure, to calm her resentment ; and in reality, she began to think of him with more tenderness than anger. She blamed herself for this weakness ; but her self-reproach was not violent enough to prevent her being very much displeased at her mamma for her not fulfilling her promise. At first she determined to conceal
her

her dissatisfaction : but in spite of her resolution, it appeared in her looks.

Mrs. Goodwin was not a little angry at seeing her daughter so engrossed by her affection for one whom she thought she ought to abhor, as to be unable to share in the general joy : she even with more asperity than she had ever assumed, reproached her for want of affection where she ought to feel it, as well as an unbecoming weakness where she had reason to be indifferent. These reproaches threw her into a flood of tears, which she strove in vain to conceal, and which prevented her returning an immediate answer. At length in the midst of sobs, she cried, ‘ O madam, how little do I deserve your anger ! my heart is warm with gratitude and love for you, my double mother ; but consider, let Mr. Trueman have now made me ever so unhappy, it is to him I owe that I am not sunk below your notice. Kind as you are, had I not been protected by him, you would have found me in all probability, a vile, a shameless wretch. Since, if the designs of my betrayer had taken place, the most innocent heart would not have procured me pity or credit amongst the virtuous part of mankind, who always believe a deluded woman made wretched by her own consent.’

Mrs. Goodwin lost by degrees all appearance of repentment, but did not seem in the least inclinable to forgive the false step of Trueman ; she even inveighed with a good deal of bitterness on the perfidy of men ; and on all occasions was extremely severe on the weakness that made the women so very ready to join with them, in making so wide a difference in the want of chastity between the two sexes. The laws of God, she said, made no such distinctions, and, for her part, she could not see why a lady’s marrying a man of a debauched character should not be looked on as much an indelicacy as a gentleman’s taking to wife a common woman. ‘ Nay,’ she continued, ‘ it is very probable that the unhappy female may be wicked more through necessity than choice, which can never be the case of the rake. It is therefore absolutely inconsistent

‘ consistent with reason, to palliate and excuse the more
‘ aggravated faults of the one, while we condemn to
‘ ignominy and shame the other, for crimes of the
‘ same kind.’

As this was reasoning on a subject that Miss Peggy had before often considered, when talking to Mrs. Goodwin of Miss Jenny’s lover, Mr. Saunders, and at that time not believing her dear Trueman could have any concern in such a topic, had given her opinion without reserve; against the imprudence of such of her own sex as ventured happiness on the hazardous hopes of reforming a libertine, she could not with the least grace, utter a syllable in contradiction to this way of arguing, though her heart longed for an opportunity of pleading for her lover.

As Mrs. Goodwin had no farther occasion to conceal Miss Peggy’s being her daughter, she acknowledged her for such before all her servants, and preparations were immediately made for her making a brilliant appearance: this she complied with, rather to persuade her mamma that her mind was at ease than from any delight she herself felt at the approaching prospect. Could she have been convinced that her lover had been falsely accused, and was still worthy her affection, how much sincerer would have been her joy, than that she experienced when she attended her mamma in a visit adorned with a blaze of jewels, and with every ornament proper for a young lady who was destined to be the heiress of many thousands?

However, though the melancholy situation of her mind a good deal lessened the force of her natural charms, she undesignedly made a considerable impression on the heart of a person of distinction, who was present at Mrs. Thomson’s assembly; and the next day her mamma received, from the lady she visited, intelligence of her daughter’s conquest, and a high character of the man of quality who wanted to profess himself the admirer of the agreeable Miss Williams.

His lordship really possessed many amiable qualities, and the young lady seemed very much pleased with his conversation the preceding evening, but no sooner did

did her mother, whom for the future we shall call Mrs. Williams, mention him as a lover, than bursting into tears, she desired to hear no more on so disagreeable a subject. 'If, said she, I was inclined to marriage, that gentleman of all others would be the last I should chuse; he is old enough to be my father; but that is a trifle. I could never see him without feeling sensations that would render me absolutely unhappy.' Mrs. Williams pressed Miss Peggy to tell her what she meant. She would have evaded the question: however, at last she said, he was so extremely like Mr. Trueman, that it would be impossible he should be a moment from her thoughts, while she beheld his lordship. Mrs. Williams had herself observed this likeness: but took no notice of it before her daughter, for she made it her constant rule never to speak of Trueman, and she now treated the observation with much indifference, and replied, that personal likeness was a very insignificant reason for aversion, since his lordship might be a very worthy man, and yet resemble even the greatest villain in his exterior form; and then added, 'since you look on his being so much older than yourself as no material objection, I depend on your good sense to get over this ridiculous scruple.' Poor Peggy was not a little embarrassed, that her mother either did not, or would not understand her meaning, yet she, as well as she could, repressed the rising sighs and avoided any further explanation, lest her affection for Trueman might make her say what she had reason to believe would be disagreeable to this best of mothers: but, alas! she was far from thinking his lordship's resemblance to Mr. Trueman any proof of his wanting merit, since it was this very resemblance that had engaged her first notice, and made her listen to him with complacency, and pleasure; but she had paid dear for this satisfaction; her lover had not been a moment from her thoughts the whole night; she figured to herself the exquisite delight it would have given her to have placed her Trueman, had he continued faithful, in a shining station? 'but ah, said she to herself, who is it I thus wish to advance? One who has rendered him-

self

‘ self unworthy a modest woman’s regard ; a slave to
‘ his passions ; a keeper ; even while he pretended a
‘ chaste and honest affection to a virtuous woman, a
‘ keeper : ’tis true he believed me false ; but will that
‘ acquit him ? If not, it certainly ought to be some
‘ little palliation of his guilt in regard to me : but why
‘ do I seek to excuse the man whom I must endeavour
‘ to forget ? They whom I am under the strongest ob-
‘ ligations to obey, forbid my tenderness, forbid my
‘ love. Were the emotions of the heart in our own
‘ power, how gladly would I comply with these hard
‘ injunctions ; yet surely something is due to his un-
‘ common generosity : He would have made me his
‘ wife when the disparity was as great betwixt us as it
‘ is now. Bless me ! how does love make me reason !
‘ He is now a thousand times more degraded by his
‘ guilt than I am advanced by the prospect of wealth.
‘ Would to heaven poverty was his only crime, as it
‘ was once mine : not all the reproaches of the world,
‘ not all the powers on earth should prevent me from
‘ shielding the dear youth from distress, and shewing
‘ the gratitude and softness that fill my bosom : a soft-
‘ ness that I must now try to conquer. Painful task !
‘ did he find it so, when he forgot me enough to in-
‘ dulse criminal desires ?’

Here pride and resentment gave her spirits, which she mistook for unshaken resolutions of casting him from her thoughts for ever. She arose in this situation of mind, but continued in it no longer than till her mother told her of her new conquest, when the thoughts of becoming another’s, and of resigning for ever all hopes of being reconciled to Trueman, awaked in her breast a thousand intendering ideas, and convinced her how dear, how very dear, he was to her, in spite of all his faults. But I must put an end to this chapter, in order to return to Trueman.

C H A P. II.

Trueman, in the midst of perplexity, writes Mrs. Saunders a long letter, and that lady becomes his advocate.

CLEORA's husband still persisted in refusing any accommodation, though Mr. Trueman had offered seven hundred pounds to drop the affair. In the midst of this perplexity the news of Miss Williams's being the heiress of her uncle's and mamma's fortune reached his ears. Where were now his hopes? though he fancied the poor, the dependent Peggy might be prevailed on to forgive his weakness and infidelity, when his offers convinced her of his regard, what inducement could she now have to favour him, when it was impossible to make her sensible that it was not interest, sordid interest, that made him seek a reconciliation? In vain did he represent to himself the meanness of regretting the good fortune of her he loved, and the selfishness of wishing her less happy, that he might have the greater chance of becoming more so: his head might insinuate that he ought to rejoice, that she was advanced too high for him to contribute to her happiness, but his heart felt very little of that delight with which it would have been filled, had it been to him she owed a much humbler lot. He had proposed to himself the most extatic happiness in removing her from a state of dependance, to one that he imagined would satisfy her utmost ambition: her present affluence deprived him of this sweetest consolation of his life, and what had been his greatest support under the plagues and embarrassments that had been the consequence of his criminal amour.

The wide difference of their present circumstances rendered his hopes of reconciliation more faint, and he grew still less solicitous about the success of his cause. Had his bail been as remiss as himself, he must have been surrendered up before he had taken any measures for his defence; however his friend Mr. Joseph

seph Williams, the honest countryman who had procured him bail, with much persuasion prevailed on him to employ an attorney at least to gain time, in hopes that the indigence of his antagonist might force him to come to terms. As the gentleman who undertook his affair assured him there could be nothing done to injure his interest for some weeks, he went to his house in the country, where the alterations that had been made for the reception of his dear, his charming Peggy, filled him with uneasiness, as indeed did almost every object he beheld. While he was thus a prey to anxiety, he ventured to write to Mrs. Saunders the following description of his distress : for he was enough acquainted with her history to know her to be the most proper advocate he could chuse ; since her experience might persuade his Peggy, that a man might be guilty of repeated enormities, yet, when reclaimed, render a woman of delicacy and discernment completely happy. His letter ran thus :

‘ MADAM,

‘ **W**HEN I left your seat, I was full of the agree-
 ‘ able hopes of soon seeing and being united
 ‘ to the lovely Miss Williams. I deferred this wished
 ‘ for interview but till I could satisfy my fondness, by
 ‘ offering her my little fortune, free from an unhappy
 ‘ incumbrance. Fatal delay ! I now despair of mak-
 ‘ ing the dear creature believe with what sincerity I
 ‘ love, since her being my superior in fortune will give
 ‘ a self-interested turn to every offer I can make. It was
 ‘ but a few days ago that I heard of her change of cir-
 ‘ cumstances ; yet I am persuaded you was acquainted
 ‘ with it before I left you. Your silence, madam,
 ‘ makes me imagine you saw something in my beha-
 ‘ viour that caused you to suspect my Peggy was be-
 ‘ come less dear to me. You wrong me, madam, if
 ‘ you harbour so cruel a suspicion. Her lovely idea,
 ‘ her virtue, her purity, like a whip of scorpions,
 ‘ stung my bosom, and lashed me for follies that I
 ‘ would have gladly hid from the world ; but more e-
 ‘ specially from those who had it in their power to in-
 ‘ form

form her of them. This precaution is now unnecessary, since the person to whom I owe the knowledge of her having found in Mrs. Goodwin a mother, told me that the dear maid is acquainted with all my faults; and that her mamma is bent on refusing me, should I have the hardiness to renew my addresses. I confess to you, tho' I still love her with the utmost tenderness, I could not bring my self to hazard a denial, till I knew whether my Peggy herself was the inspirer of this cruel resolution. Blessed with her affection, I should esteem it no meanness to try every method in my power to remove the dislike of her mother; but my heart rises at the thought of courting her scorn; and I know myself incapable of bearing from her, what I believe is frequently practised on more deserving men.

O, madam! you have felt what it is to love; to love a man whose passions made him guilty of actions that his judgment disapproved on reflection: teach my ever dear Peggy to imitate your conduct, and to resent no longer a fault that is already punished by my own remorse. Could I make her sensible of what passes in my heart, I think I should hardly need an advocate: but alas! how can I hope to conquer an anger, which my conduct has but too justly deserved? Or, how can I blame her mother for insisting on her avoiding a man of whom she has heard so bad a character? I do not, I dare not justify myself. Yet surely I ought not to be branded with the name of rake and debauchee, for one unallowed crime. Yet as it is not given to mortals to know the secret recesses of the soul, how can the dear creature or her prudent mother, be assured, that this first deviation from virtue may not be the beginning of a life of infamy and villainy!

In this manner I reason, while my heart is bursting with agony at remembering the happiness I have lost, lost by my own unguarded folly. But why should I, by these fond complaints, influence you to plead my hopeless cause, when perhaps him you plead for, may in a few months become an indigent beggar? It

‘ It was a dread of this that kept me from Miss Wil-
‘ liams, while I thought her dependant; and can I
‘ now hope that she will overlook a circumstance which
‘ the whole world thinks so material. If I consult my
‘ reason I despair; but if I search into the dictates of
‘ my own mind, influenced by the softest and the
‘ strongest of all human passions, a glimmering of
‘ hope gives me a transient joy, since if I am at all ac-
‘ quainted with myself, the possession of the Peruvian
‘ mines would never have made my dearest Peggy less
‘ the charmer of my heart: and I can recollect a thou-
‘ sand instances, that once persuaded me our tenderness
‘ was mutual. Dear madam, forgive this long letter.
‘ While I am writing to you my aching heart feels a
‘ momentary ease, and I fancy myself in the readiest
‘ road to a reconciliation with my dear, my lovely
‘ Peggy: mine did I say; fond man, perhaps she de-
‘ spises thee! I cannot bear the thought. Ah! how
‘ happy would the human race be, could we attend to
‘ the consequences of our irregular desires, in the midst
‘ of their impetuosity! If I lose her---if I lose her for
‘ ever, where shall I fasten a just accusation but on my-
‘ self! This consideration adds a double weight to my
‘ despair, already almost insupportable: but I would
‘ not, by unmanly wailings, add you to the number of
‘ those who may despise me, so will conclude with only
‘ desiring you to tell Miss Williams, I would fain bring
‘ my heart to rejoice at her splendid situation; but the
‘ fluttering thing felt so much transport at the thought
‘ of my giving her ease, and what, I then esteemed
‘ affluence, that it can’t resign this power without deep
‘ regret: however, her happiness is so closely connect-
‘ ed with my own, that I can’t, I think I can’t be ab-
‘ solutely miserable, while she enjoys felicity, so it is
‘ in reality self interestedness that inclines me to wish
‘ her happy; as happy as beauty, youth, and wealth
‘ can make her: I would have added another article
‘ to have compleated her bliss; but alas! can I, must
‘ I wish the dear maid the tender delights of love?
‘ This thought informs me what I must feel when I
‘ have

‘ have lost all hope, and how vainly I reason, when I
 ‘ expect ease merely from her happiness, without the
 ‘ extatic joy of increasing that happiness, by sharing in
 ‘ it. From the fulness of my heart I am running on,
 ‘ forgetful of all bounds : pardon a man actuated by
 ‘ jealousy and despair, and permit me to subscribe my-
 ‘ self,

• MADAM,

‘ Your most obliged,

‘ humble servant,

‘ J. TRUEMAN.’

Mrs. Saunders, influenced by pity for Trueman, as well as by a little female curiosity, which tempted her to enquire into what fault he had committed, sent his long epistle to Miss Williams, enclosed in a letter from herself.

As it was the young lady’s custom to conceal nothing from her mother, but the softness she still felt for Trueman, she opened her packet before her ; but on casting her eye on the superscription of her lover’s letter, she blushed and became pale almost in the same instant ; when her mamma observing the alteration of her countenance, asked, with eagerness, if there was any ill news from her friend ? She replied, with a trembling voice, that Mrs. Saunders had sent one of Mr. Trueman’s letters, and she was weak enough to be affected at seeing his hand writing ; ‘ but as a punishment, ma-
 ‘ dam, for this foible,’ she added in a tone of more firmness, ‘ I will deprive myself of the satisfaction of
 ‘ reading Mrs. Saunders’s epistle till you have perused
 ‘ it.’

Miss Peggy immediately left the room, being, indeed, for all her boasted resolution, absolutely unfit to continue in it longer, as she could hardly restrain a burst of tenderness that overflowed her heart, till she got to her own chamber. Here she gave vent to the tumult of her mind, in a violent shower of tears. At this time the girl who had made so free with the character of Trueman, was employed in dusting a closet ; and poor Peggy’s heart was too full to let her be very minute

nute in her observations: she, therefore, without seeing the maid, flung herself on the bed, where, in the midst of sobs, she several times pronounced her lover's name. This drew the attention of the young woman; who ran to Miss Williams, and begged her to tell her the cause of this agony.

The poor young lady was extremely confounded at having a witness of her weakness, a witness too that she could not help disliking, on account of her having heard her talk with an appearance of satisfaction, in a very disrespectful manner of her dear Trueman: she now expected to be made the ridicule of every servant in the house; but Bridget soon dissipated this fear by the apology she made for her former conduct. 'Dear madam,' said she, 'be comforted. If I had known you had been my lady's daughter, I would have cut my tongue out before I would have talked in so rough a manner of any one you liked; but while I believed you not much better than myself, I thought I owed you but little more regard than my fellow servants, whom I should take a pride in mortifying, if they set themselves above me: indeed Ma'am, I don't believe Mr. Trueman is half so bad as he is represented. What if he did keep a mistress, I don't believe he keeps one now; for the woman he lived with is with her husband, and my acquaintance tells me she is in a very wretched condition. If my lady will not suffer you to marry till she finds a man that has never been guilty of this way, I am afraid she won't have the happiness being a grandmother in a hurry.'

Miss Peggy recollected herself as well as she was able during this harrangue, and told the impertinent girl she wondered at her freedom: adding, that she should never be pleased with her, if she took the liberty of talking of her mother with the least disrespect. 'I am,' she continued, 'in no haste for a husband, so shall never be offended at my mamma's scrupulosity.' Well, Miss, returned the girl, encouraged by the gentle manner in which her young lady spoke, 'I say servants and poor folks are better off than you people

of

‘ of fortune, for we can marry those we like, without making such a rout about it.’

Miss Williams, for that time, dismissed her maid, without making any answer about Trueman; but as she found her a good intelligent girl, she determined, when her mind was more calm, to learn all she could from her, on this subject: she had yet heard little else besides broken hints, and unconnected scraps of scandal: for her pride, her tenderdels, and even her ruffled spirits, prevented her giving a close attention to what was uttered with a design to reach her ears. Her mamma indeed spoke of him as of an abandoned libertine; but as the subject always put them both on the fret, they as much as possible avoided it.

While Miss Peggy was in her chamber, her mother was perusing Mrs. Saunders’s letter. That lady espoused the cause of Trueman, with a warmth that gave a little offence to Mrs. Williams. I have told my reader the natural disposition of the two ladies were extremely different; no wonder then, that on so nice a subject their thoughts should not be exactly alike. The free temper of Mrs. Saunders inclined her to treat the infidelity of a lover rather as a folly than a crime, while the strictness of Mrs. Williams, and a remembrance of what she had suffered, made her feel a tender dread for the fate of her dearest daughter, if influenced by such an advocate, she too should confound ideas, and think that only folly that deserved the title of complicated and aggravated guilt. To hinder this from being the effect of Mrs. Saunders’s letter, she determined to prepare the mind of Miss Peggy, before she would suffer her to read it. Trueman’s letter remained unopened on the table when she formed this resolution; but she had hardly read three lines, before she herself began to relax of her severity, and when her daughter came down, she gave her her friend’s epistle, with no other caution, than ‘Take care, my dear, of your heart; Mrs. Saunders is strangely in the interest of Mr. Trueman, and he pleads his own cause most admirably.’ As Miss Peggy had not for a long time heard her mother mention Trueman’s name,

but with an air of anger and dissatisfaction, she was agreeably surprized at this alteration, and read with eagerness the following epistle from her friend Mrs. Saunders.

‘ Dear PEGGY,

‘ **E**XCUSE my freedom. You just now rise to my view the agreeable maid I beheld you, when with filial piety you were stripping yourself of your little, I was going to say ornaments, but to brighten your character, they were necessities, stripping yourself to succour your distressed father. Ah, Peggy, at that time Mr. Trueman stood in no need of an advocate. I saw you weep for his misfortunes. Surely you have too much sense to let the depraved customs of the world bias you; but I’ll not anticipate the poor man’s reasonings, he justly argues, when he hopes from what he feels. If his tenderness for you made him despise your want of wealth, I can see no reason, now the tables are turned, why you should not have the same partiality in his favour. If he has been guilty of some indiscretions, of an infidelity that has justly incurred your anger, he seems too sensible of the wrong himself, to deserve that you should still be warm in your resentment. It ever was, and is still my opinion, that our sex expose themselves more to the lash of the men’s satire by their irreconcilable behaviour, and exerting their utmost revenge against follies, such as I imagine Mr. Trueman’s, than by all their foibles.

‘ Consider, my dear, amiable as you are, the chance you must run of being many times disagreeable to an all perfect husband: the men, notwithstanding their own imperfections, are far enough from being short-sighted with respect to ours; then what must we expect from those who have no faults to make them humble?

‘ I know indeed, by long experience, the mortification it gives a woman of sensibility, pardon my vanity, to have the man she loves act inconsistent with that affection she wishes to inspire; but does it
‘ become

' become the best of us to be implacable ? To me it
 ' appears a mere quibble to pretend to forgive an injury,
 ' while we are continuing the punishment. I wrong,
 ' I hope I wrong you, if I suppose Mr. Trueman can
 ' need any one to plead his cause, after you have per-
 ' used the inclosed. I make no doubt but he wrote
 ' it with a design that you should see it. What can be
 ' more pathetic ? What can be more striking ? He who
 ' once had it in his power, to rule your affections in
 ' favour of others, now thinks he stands in want of an
 ' intercessor himself. Be generously kind, and write
 ' me such a letter, as will revive his fainting hopes :
 ' but I forget, your mamma's approbation ought to be
 ' asked before such a step can be taken, and I know her
 ' an enemy to all artifice ; get her but to read poor
 ' Trueman's letter, and I dare say she will not refuse
 ' him her pity : for my own part, was my girl in your
 ' situation, and as tenderly beloved as I believe you to
 ' be, I should rejoice in her prospect of happiness, and
 ' not hesitate a moment to give my consent to just such
 ' another lover. It is not from one false step we ought
 ' to define the character of the man ; but from the ten-
 ' nor of his life. Dear Miss Williams, judge by this
 ' rule, and Mr. Trueman will still be happy. You have
 ' been for years the supreme delight of his life : will
 ' generosity, will justice let you stifle the remembrance
 ' of a number of obligations, which I have heard you
 ' recount with pleasure ? Must he who ventured, and
 ' actually underwent, the horrors of a jail to protect
 ' you from ruin, be rendered wretched by your want
 ' of pity ? I can't suppose it. I am not acquainted
 ' with the nature of his offence ; but if it was only an
 ' intrigue with some other woman ; or what is, in my
 ' opinion less heinous, a criminal indulgence into which
 ' he was hurried by the strength of passion, without de-
 ' sign, forgive and use him kindly, make him yours,
 ' and I dare insure your happiness and his fidelity.
 ' Dear Peggy, I know your heart sides with my plead-
 ' ings ; but I am under some pain lest they should give
 ' offence to your mamma, whom I honour and revere,
 ' tho' my volatile temper will not let me imitate her
 ' gravity.

‘ gravity. I am happy myself, tho’ my consort was far
 ‘ from being a Joseph, and I would fain persuade you
 ‘ to become so, by giving your hand where your heart
 ‘ has long been fixed, for let his crime be what it will,
 ‘ I affirm, from what I know of you both, that who-
 ‘ ever human frailty made him chuse for the mistress of
 ‘ an unguarded idle hour, you will never be happy
 ‘ without each other. You are the wife of his choice,
 ‘ her on whom he has fixed his esteem ; reward this
 ‘ choice, and let me congratulate you both : which will
 ‘ give a high pleasure to, dear Miss,

‘ Yours, most sincerely,

‘ J. SAUNDERS.’

Miss Williams read every sentence that favoured her lover with approbation, except those that brought strongly to her mind the nature of his offence, which gave her pain, notwithstanding the slight manner in which it was treated by her friend : she could not reconcile herself to that mistress of an idle hour, with half the ease she wished. It was necessary, it was politic, to make Trueman plead for Trueman : his letter softened her heart, and when she came to that part where he mentioned his fear of becoming a beggar, she burst into tears, and after continuing a moment thoughtful, cried, ‘ I’ll try all my power to prevent
 ‘ that at least : that I may do, surely, without any of-
 ‘ fence to virtue.’

Her mamma, who was in the room, smiled at her agitation, and guessed the cause, but did not interrupt her. But when she had finished her letter, she asked her with a smile, what generous resolution had made her forget herself, and talk aloud. ‘ It is, madam,’ she replied, inspired with confidence by the kind looks of her mother, ‘ to return some part of the debt I owe
 ‘ Mr. Trueman : he says, he is afraid his folly will be
 ‘ his ruin ; let me, O let me save from want the man
 ‘ that sheltered me from destruction. My heart will
 ‘ find far more satisfaction from this use of money, than
 ‘ any

‘any I can put it to.’ ‘Why, my dear,’ returned Mrs. Williams, ‘I am informed the man who sues him lays his action for five thousand pounds, and is so sure of success that he has actually refused almost one thousand,’ Five thousand pounds !’ answered Miss Peggy, almost stunned at the largeness of the sum, ‘then I despair of serving him ; but I am sure, at least, I ought to try. I am told this enemy is in necessitous circumstances ; perhaps he may be glad to take what he once refused. Your tenderness, madam, has engaged you to give me many ornaments of value, permit me to dispose of them.’ Mrs. Williams answered, ‘No, no, my dear, you shan’t want the power of shewing your gratitude, without being obliged to part with your jewels. I think with you that something ought to be done, to shew that we are not ungrateful : but it is a nice point, Mr. Trueman may attribute our endeavours to serve him, as an invitation to renew his addresses ; or at least, as a proof that we have not all the dislike to his conduct it deserves, both which I would willingly avoid.’

The consultation at length terminated in a resolution to get to the speech of Trueman’s antagonist, and Mrs. Williams, at Miss’s desire, left the interview to her. They avoided returning any answer to Mrs. Saunders’s letter, till they were better acquainted with the situation of Trueman’s law-suit, the vexatious effects of which they resolved to prevent, if it was in the power of a moderate sum to do it.

While the affairs of Trueman seemed to be thus changing for the better, he waited with a painful expectation for an answer from Mrs. Saunders, and every post increased his fear, that she too had given him up as unworthy of her friendship.

C H A P. III.

In which is some unexpected particulars, relating to Trueman's birth.

MR S. Middleton, Trueman's house-keeper, often endeavoured to divert her master in his thoughtful moments, by ripping up the little occurrences of his infant years, and talking with a fond respect of his deceased mother and uncle; and the tattle of this worthy old woman frequently gave a new turn to his reflections, when they were most tormenting. One day he was oppressed with the most gloomy melancholy, and among other causes of discontent was revolving in his mind the unkind behaviour of his father: he spoke of him with some bitterness; but was not a little surprized to hear old Sarah, as she always insisted on his calling her, take his part so far as to say 'Perhaps my old master may not be so much to blame as you imagine.' 'Not to blame!' returned Trueman in a heat, 'not to blame to endeavour to cheat me out of what he knew to be my right.' 'Nay, dear master;' replied the faithful creature, 'be not angry with me; I wish, things were otherwise; but I am afraid he will never like you better, nor give you any share in what he is worth, if he can help it; for while I was in the family there was a talk of settling all on master Robin.'

Mr. Trueman felt more indignation than he expressed at this barbarous treatment, and old Sarah could not be prevailed on to explain what she meant by vindicating her master's father in his barbarity. As often as it recurred to Trueman's memory, it appeared to him mysterious, tho' she did all in her power to make him believe he had misunderstood what she said; but the imbarassment and confusion with which she spoke, while she was endeavouring to explain away the real sense of what she had uttered, convinced him that there was some important meaning which she strove to conceal. It was in vain that he pressed her; no intreaties

ties could make her give him the least hint towards unravelling the mystery that he was persuaded was hid under her words ; but what she refused to disclose, a very little time brought to light.

It was Trueman's custom to spend an hour or two every day, in a thoughtful solitude, under the shade of some tall trees that grew near his house ; as he was crossing the high road to get to his beloved covert, he picked up an open letter directed to the Lord Northly, in which, to his great amazement, he found his own name mentioned several times, and tho' great part of the letter was covered with mud, there was enough legible to fill him with apprehensions of a rival, as well as to give him some concern for his own life. He found that his lordship was informed that it was to him he ought to attribute Miss Williams's coldness, and that he was advised to put a stop to his claim, if he hoped to succeed with that lady : his first thoughts led him to believe that nothing less than a challenge would be the consequence of this advice ; but he was roused from these reflections ; and the astonishment that this incident had thrown him in, by a dreadful groan that issued from among the trees : he pocketted the letter, and hastened to succour the distressed. At the entrance of the covert he beheld a well-dressed man, who appeared to be near thirty years of age ; as he was as pale as death and his eye-lids closed, Trueman believed the groan he had heard was occasioned by nature's last pang ; but on his going near him, he found he still breathed : he hurried home to procure the poor man some assistance, and quickly returned with a couple of stout fellows, who removed him from the damp earth, where he lay, and carried him to Trueman's house, intirely insensible : not all the remedies they could use, brought him enough to himself to be able to speak till the next day, when he gave such an account of himself as would have made a man of less humanity than Trueman repent of his hospitality.

' You see before you,' said he, addressing himself to Trueman ; ' a wretch unworthy to live. Heaven has disappointed my designs ; but I have all the mur-

‘derer’s guilt. Deliver me, fir, up to juſtice; I wiſh
‘not for life, and I have no hopes of eſcaping the
‘ſhame of a public exit; yet if my hand had not
‘erred, I had before now been paſt all ſenſe of ſhame,
‘but, all-merciful heaven! I had been paſt repentance
‘too.’

Contending paſſions made him unable to proceed. Mr. Trueman thought himſelf ſtrangely intereſted in this man’s ſtory, and was not without ſuſpicion that he was the perſon deſigned to be murdered, and that this was ſome baſe aſſaſſin hired by the unknown Lord Northly to take away his life: however the agitation and terror of this unhappy man worked too ſtrongly on his pity to ſuffer him to come at the truth, by making a handle of his own confeſſion, and delivering him up to juſtice; he even gave him every conſolation in his power, promiſing to conceal him from the world. But vain were theſe promiſes; he expired the next day.

Some hours before he died, he pronounced the names of Lord Northly and Miſs Williams, with great earneſtneſs, and exclaimed againſt himſelf, as the worſt of villains; he ſeemed in his ſenſes, and Trueman was near his bed-ſide, but when he aſked him with eagerneſs, what he knew of Miſs Williams, he replied, ‘Nothing. I never ſaw her; it was avarice, curſt avarice, that made me ſeek his death. Had my friend, my benefactor, never ſeen her, I might now have been innocent and happy!’ Here he was ſeized with convulſions which put an end to his diſcourſe, and he uttered nothing more but wild incoherent ravings.

After his death, it was found that he had ſhot himſelf under the left breaſt, and by the colour of the wound it appeared to have been done ſome time. As there was no enquiry made concerning this man, Trueman was confirmed in the opinion, of his being ſent to deſtroy him; but however he kept his thoughts to himſelf, but felt the keenest reſentment, reſolving, if he ever ſhould meet this baſe lord, to accuſe him of intending to murder him: nay, he worked himſelf up to ſuch a pitch, by conſidering him as a pretender to his

his dear Miss Williams, and by the dread of his quality, making him a successful rival, that he resolved to be his own avenger, and to call him to a strict account for his designed villainy; but he had no means of finding where to direct to his lordship, as the letter he had found did not mention the place of abode, it having been covered with an outward case. The restless uneasiness of his mind; the continual fear of fresh injuries, and his impatience to revenge old ones, made him so miserable that he wished his lordship's execrable agent had been permitted to perform his task; but this weariness of life did not at all lessen his desire of satisfaction, as it is improperly called; for every time his reflections returned to Miss Williams, the idea of her becoming the wife of the man he detested, made that detestation increase.

Mr. Trueman, while in this painful perturbation of mind, received the news of his father's death, and at the same time he found that Sarah had been well acquainted with the old man's intentions, since he saw himself utterly excluded from any share in what he possessed. His thoughts were so full of revenge, jealousy, and love, that he hardly considered this injustice as a misfortune; but as his temper was a good deal the worse for his perplexities, he vented several expressions of anger against his father, that would not have escaped him, had he not been already rendered peevish, even tho' he had felt the loss of wealth more keenly. He threatened to endeavour to set aside the will by a course of law; but his honest housekeeper advised him to the contrary, telling him that she was sure his father's wife would be too cunning for him; for to her knowledge she had consulted the ablest counsellors.

As his passions gained strength by opposition, he said some harsh things to the poor old woman, and charged her with being cold to his interest. This her affection could not bear; she was immediately thrown off her guard, and replied with tears, 'Your mother never doubted my love both to you and herself, when she trusted me with a secret which she concealed
' from

‘from the whole world. When I advise you not to contradict my old master’s will, I do no more than what is just; for I know you have no more right to his estate than him he has left it to, nor perhaps half so much. He, if people say true, is his child; but I have your mother’s word for it, that you are not so.’ ‘Not old Trueman’s son,’ replied Trueman in a flame. ‘I will not suffer the fame of my dear mother to be traduced; what ground, what reason have you for such a suggestion?’ ‘I have proofs for what I have said,’ returned the house-keeper; ‘but I have bound myself by an oath never to produce them, except to your real father: and this secret should have died with me, if my love for you, that could not bear to be suspected, had not forced it from me. My dearest master, I can only tell you, that you owe your birth to a gentleman of rank, who has been many years out of the kingdom, to which perhaps he will never return; but till I have certain news of his death, or believe my own to be near, I will religiously observe my vow, in keeping from the eyes of every creature, a letter your mother gave me for him on her death-bed.’

This strange discovery threw Trueman into the utmost amazement. He had not the least reason to doubt the veracity of the affectionate old woman, who had given him the strongest proof a disinterested love, when she had offered to strip herself of her all to render him happy; it was not therefore at all likely that she should, when his bounty had made her independent of his mother-in-law, be so far engaged in her interest as to frame a falsehood to prevent his prosecuting his just right. He discarded the suggestion the moment it entered his thoughts, and with an air of confidence, that restored the peace of the poor old woman’s mind, begged to be informed of all the circumstances she could let him know, without breach of her oath, saying, that his curiosity should never make him wish her to infringe so sacred an obligation.

She told him, that his grand-father had under his care the two sons of a gentleman, who had an estate near

near the parish of which he was curate ; these young gentlemen were placed with this poor man, who lived in a very frugal manner, in order to enure them sometimes to hardships. When they were old enough to be sent to the university, their father suffered them to appear suitable to his rank ; but before, there was scarce any difference to be seen betwixt them and their tutor's sons. The youngest of the two boys, very early shewed an affection for his master's daughter, and this affection continued, even after he went to the college, and he frequently stole a week or two from study to see her. ' In one of these clandestine interviews, said the old woman, they had a quarrel, in which your mother resolved never more to see her lover. Happy would it have been for her, if she had kept her resolution. ' For several weeks he was denied admittance, in which time my poor young mistress was continually teized by her father, who had got some intimation of the young squire's being her sweet-heart, to accept of the courtship of a farmer's son, in our neighbourhood, who had a little money left him by a relation. Though she was very angry with the young gentleman her lover, she could hardly be prevailed on to think of another ; however, to oblige her father, she let this man, who was my old master Trueman, come to see her, and as I believed him to be an honest man I persuaded your mother to listen to his offers, though I knew of her love to the gentleman. Often and often have I reproached myself for this advice, which she unhappily took. When her anger began to abate, she would gladly have recalled the encouragement she had given Trueman, to whom she had not the least affection ; but her father insisted on her marrying him, and she resolved to obey. Mean while the young spark used all his diligence to get to the sight of his mistress, and by the contrivance of a base wretch of a dairy-maid, was concealed in my young mistress's bed-chamber, without the knowledge of any other person in the house. He made himself known the moment she came into the room, and protested he

‘ had no design that need give her terror, since he only
‘ came to take a last farewell. The moving manner in
‘ which he spoke, made her forget all her anger.
‘ They lamented together the inequality of their stations;
‘ which hindered their being happy : in short, the
‘ poor dear creature, who had till now always been an
‘ example of modesty and prudence, so far forgot her-
‘ self as to be persuaded out of her honour. This only
‘ fault cost her millions of tears, and at last her life :
‘ for she never enjoyed a peaceful minute afterwards.
‘ The wicked creature, who had been hired by the
‘ gentleman to hide him, was the first to divulge my
‘ poor mistress’s shame, and her altered looks confirmed
‘ the truth of what she said. I shall never forget the
‘ piteous lamentations she made, when I gave into her
‘ hand a letter that told her the parents of her lover
‘ had caused him to be sent to sea, for fear he should
‘ be persuaded to marry her : but vain were all her
‘ weeping, she never saw him more. There were in
‘ this letter notes to the value of a hundred pounds,
‘ which the writer said, was to comfort her for the loss
‘ of one whom she ought to have thought too much a-
‘ bove her, to have given him encouragement. She at
‘ last found herself with child, and intrusted me with
‘ her condition ; meanwhile her father pressed her ear-
‘ nestly to marry the young farmer, who having heard
‘ of her present, renewed his suit with great warmth,
‘ though, I dare say, he guessed on what account
‘ the money was given. To make short of my story,
‘ she continued, my young mistress was prevailed on to
‘ marry him, after he had been made acquainted with
‘ her misfortune. Till this time he behaved well
‘ enough ; but as there was not much love on either
‘ side, they soon grew discontented with each other,
‘ and the years the husband met with when you was born,
‘ which was before your mother had been married se-
‘ ven months, encreased his ill humour. He reproached
‘ her with her folly, though he himself is sadly belied
‘ if he was not as guilty with your brother’s mother ;
‘ but the men may do any thing, you know ; I suppose
‘ he would have made no scruple of telling the whole

‘ town

'town that you were not his son, if he had not given
 'his oath, and a bond, that obliged him never to di-
 'vulge it, on the forfeiture of all he had with his wife.
 'This bond my mistress put in my possession before she
 'died; which, I think, ought to be a proof of the
 'truth of what I have been telling you.' Here she
 produced the bond, which, without mentioning what
 the secret was, obliged old Trueman to silence. She
 then went on with her relation, telling him that his
 supposed father always had an aversion to him from his
 birth, and it was this aversion that made his mother beg
 her brother the minister to take the boy under his care,
 as he was continually the cause of quarrels while he was
 in the family. She said too, that his poor mother fell
 a sacrifice to her weakness and her husband's ill nature;
 that she continued to love the man who had been her
 ruin; and therefore had not affection enough for her
 husband to bear his froward humour, with a becoming
 patience; and that she never returned his snapishness,
 without exposing herself to the most cutting reflections.
 'I alone, she added, was made acquainted with her
 'unhappiness, all about them thinking her extremely
 'well married, as master was a sober industrious man,
 'and in a thriving way; but many a time, poor soul,
 'has she told me, she would gladly change conditions
 'with the meanest of her servants, if by that she could
 'escape hearing every day of her shame. At last his
 'cruelty and churlish behaviour made her take to drink-
 'ing, which soon put an end to her life and misery to-
 'gether. The day before she died, she gave me a letter,
 'which she ordered me never to give to any one but to
 'him to whom it was directed, and obliged me to pro-
 'mise to do all in my power to shield her unhappy boy
 'from misfortune. You see, sir,' she added, 'I could
 'do no less than I did, though you have so nobly
 'rewarded me. O do not doubt my affection to you
 'still; my heart bleeds while I see you moap about,
 'as if some dismal disaster had happened to you. Your
 'mother thought me worthy your confidence;--- I can
 'at least be secret.'

Mr.

Mr. Trueman began to conceive a much higher opinion of his faithful house-keeper, from this relation, than he had done before; for he thought it a great proof of her good sense, to be intrusted with a secret of such importance, and yet behave without insolence. He therefore determined to give vent to the uneasiness of his own mind, and actually made her acquainted with what he dreaded would be the consequences of his unlucky and criminal amour; and informed her of the affection he felt for the lovely Peggy, and his fear of being totally disregarded, on account of his having a man of quality for his rival. The old woman chid him for his want of conduct; laughed at his keeping away from his mistress, and trusting the success of his love to the mediation of another, and exhorted him, by all means to get a sight of her.

This opening of his heart, tho' it was only to his own servant, gave Trueman some ease, and the information the old woman had given him concerning his birth, was a relief to him rather than otherwise. He had never felt that filial reverence for the deceased old man, that affectionate children experience for a tender parent, since he had from his most early years been too much the object of his fear, to be much so of his complacency; his resentment against his supposed father vanished, and he was now glad to find him less guilty than he had imagined him: as his anger abated, he found himself less ruffled and uneasy, and he was not without a strong prepossession, that he should be acknowledged by some man of fortune, whose alliance and countenance would set him more on a level with his dear Miss Williams.

In the midst of these flattering imaginations the post brought him a letter from his attorney, that gave him still stronger hopes of happiness; but we must not quite forget Miss Williams, who was kindly employing all her endeavours to extricate her imprudent lover from the consequences of his folly.

C H A P. IV.

Miss Williams finds, in Cleora's husband, a man who had already given her much terror, and is softened enough by the distresses of the unhappy woman to forgive her, and relieve her necessities.

I Have told my readers that Miss Williams was determined to question her maid more narrowly about what she knew of Trueman. She took the surest way of hearing all the particulars that had come to her knowledge, that of seeming to doubt the truth of the whole story; for the girl, very much piqued at her young lady's appearing to disbelieve a relation, which she had credited, very readily told her in what manner she had got her intelligence, and offered to go with her to a house in the neighbourhood, where, she said, the young creature Trueman had deluded, lived almost without subsistence. Miss Peggy listened to this proposal, and pity and curiosity joined to make her accept it.

As she had no mind to be known, and had by a present obliged her servant to secrecy, she went in some of the worst of this girl's cloaths, and passed for her acquaintance. In a wretched room she found the miserable Cleora, who was alone, weeping over her crimes and misfortunes. Her pale dejected look intirely disarmed Miss Williams of the resentment she had always felt, when she considered this unhappy creature as an object of delight to Trueman; and indeed she now seemed very little capable of giving any one the passion of jealousy. The maid spoke to her without any ceremony, as to an old acquaintance, and asked her freely if Trueman was likely to agree with her husband's terms. Cleora seemed a little ruffled, and casting her eyes on Miss Peggy, said she did not chuse to talk of her affairs before absolute strangers, tho', as she wanted to ask her a question or two, she should be extremely glad to see her another time. The girl replied, that the young woman who was with her, she was very sure, would never say any thing

thing of what she heard, and she had brought her, because she knew she had it in her power to serve her. To this Cleora only replied, with a sigh, that she was too miserable to be relieved. 'Now I warrant you,' returned Bridget, 'you are pining after this wicked man, who, now he has got his ends, don't care a fig for you.'

'Far from it, answered Cleora, I would not if I might, ever see Mr. Trueman more; but, if I could, I would prevent his ruin. It was on that account I wanted to speak with you. Mrs. Dorothy told me to day that you live with Miss Williams: what is the real character of that young lady? Do you think she could be prevailed on to give me a hearing without reproaches, if I attempted speaking to her? I have a secret of importance that I should be glad to communicate to her.' 'I dare say, replied the maid, my lady will treat you with good manners, though you may be sure she won't like you the better for what has past between you and Mr. Trueman; but I think it would be better to send to her than come yourself. I will faithfully deliver any message to her.' Cleora seemed still shy of speaking before the stranger, and Miss Williams would not have reaped any satisfaction from her disguise, if the entrance of Cleora's husband had not turned her thoughts on a scheme very different from that she had proposed to herself when she came: she beheld in him the gay fellow who had given her so much terror the night she was searched by the custom house officers: it immediately occurred to her thoughts, that the fear of being discovered might make him glad to accept of what he would otherwise refuse, and she instantly resolved to make the most of this fear. This man had, by the connivance of his keepers, broke from confinement, and having escaped all pursuit for two or three years, was almost forgot; but a large parcel of tea being lately seized in the house of his aunt, he was advertised, and a reward offered for apprehending him. This Miss Peggy had learnt from the public papers.

He

He retired the moment he found his wife had company, and left Miss Williams to be made more certain that she was not mistaken in his person. She asked his unhappy wife what business her husband followed? 'None,' she said, for he was under trouble, and durst not appear abroad? 'What is he in debt,' she asked. 'I know not,' was answered; 'But for these two months we have subsisted on selling our cloaths; till that time he took care to supply me with necessaries, by something he did abroad; but now I have the near prospect of want, for he will not stir out of doors to do any thing, and he threatens to leave me as soon as his law-suit shall be decided.'

Miss Williams enquired of Cleora, if she had no relation capable of supporting her; she told her an only brother was all she could depend on for the least assistance, and his face she was ashamed to see. The distress that was visible on her countenance while she spoke, and the tears that followed, made the tender heart of Miss Peggy feel compassion, instead of anger: she forgot her disguise; she followed the dictates of her benevolence, and gave this hated woman, who had been the cause of the keenest anguish she had ever known, two guineas to supply her present necessities, and promised her future assistance. This present, so inconsistent with her appearance, and the sight of a fine diamond on her finger, which she had shewn by thoughtlessly pulling off her glove, to take the gold out of her purse, made Cleora at once see the trick that had been put on her. The tears burst out afresh, and she was unable to return proper acknowledgments to the young lady for her bounty. At last she said, with a deep sigh, 'If you, madam, are Miss Williams, I have two requests to make to you; the one is, to become my advocate with my brother, over whom I have heard you have a great influence: the other is to forgive Mr. Trueman, who is, how shall I speak it? far less guilty than I am. It was compassion alone that induced him to succour an indigent friendless creature; this compassion I acknowledge, to my eternal shame, I hoped to improve into love; but

‘ but he was too strongly attached to you, tho’ he believed you false, to give his heart to another. O, madam, forgive one only deviation from the tenderness he owed you, and you will have nothing else to pardon.’

Miss Williams sat in an attentive silence, while she was speaking; her eyes grew moist, which she endeavoured to conceal, and as soon as she had done she said, ‘ Let us not trouble ourselves about Mr. Trueman; the man that won’t plead for himself deserves not to be heard by his advocate. Tell me who this brother is, over whom I have such an influence, and depend on my inclination to serve you.’

Cleora named the young gentleman who had shewn such compassion to her supposed mother. He had from that time been very intimate in the family, and was now on the point of being married to one of Miss Peggy’s most particular acquaintance.

Miss Peggy rejoiced in the hope of bringing about this reconciliation; but at present her mind was much more earnestly employed in disentangling Trueman from his embarrassments, by bringing his antagonist to some agreement; she therefore left Cleora, after having given her fresh assurances of assistance.

C H A P. V.

An end put to Trueman’s law-suit, by the flight of his antagonist.

MISS WILLIAMS, after revolving in her mind a good many schemes to render herself serviceable to her lover, determined to force his enemy to accept of a moderate sum to drop the prosecution, or on his refusal to deliver him up to the hands of justice. Full of her project she intreated her mamma to persuade her father to endeavour to bring the wretch to terms. Mr. Williams, who was only come to town to visit his spouse and daughter, and lived almost intirely with his brother Le Brun, was not extremely ready to undertake this commission, and objected to it, as it might very probably

probably do him they would serve rather hurt than good, by increasing the arrogance and demands of the injured husband; but as Miss Peggy thought herself sure of obliging him to come to any terms, she slighted her father's reasonings, and at last, though contrary to his judgment, prevailed on him to go directly to Cleora's lodgings, and at the same time, by the assistance of Bridget her maid, got a couple of constables concealed in an adjoining room. Miss Peggy did not acquaint her servant for what these men were employed, and she, a little out of pique that she was but half trusted, and more from compassion to Cleora, who, she imagined, was to be brought to punishment, informed that unhappy creature that she might get out of the way. As she had but a moment's time to give her this information, she used but little precaution in delivering what she fancied it was so necessary she should be told; she only said two men were hid in the house, and if she had any thing to fear, she ought to make her escape. 'Then I am betrayed,' replied the husband, darting a furious look at his terrified wife, 'this comes of your private cabals; but I'll sell my life dear, you strumpet.'

The poor girl, who expected no such consequence from her officiousness, on seeing him charge a pistol, screamed out murder. When Mr. Williams entered, he found the whole house in the utmost confusion; and on his enquiry for the person he wanted, was told he had just rushed out of doors, in the utmost hurry and confusion, vowing vengeance to all who retarded his flight. Miss Williams knew nothing of this disturbance, as she did not follow her father immediately, and was excessively frightened on seeing the house surrounded with people: she asked, with great earnestness, for her father; he appeared; but seemed very much displeased, and returned home with her in the coach she came in, without speaking, though she intreated him many times to tell the cause of his anger. As soon as he came into the room where her mamma was sitting, he began by telling her a revengeful woman had often more guilt than those she endeavoured

to

to punish. 'I am not sure,' he added, 'that you won't have that of murder to answer for.' 'I sir,' replied Peggy; 'What have I done that deserves so severe a reprehension?' 'That which you can't undo,' he replied sternly. 'The woman, I believe, is frightened to death, and the man I suppose is gone to revenge himself on Trueman. Your confident, with whom you went abroad in disguise, can tell you more, if she will but speak; but I can get nothing out of her, but a confused heap of stuff, that you employed two constables to take Trueman's mistress in to custody, after you had promised to be her friend. I am ashamed of such a proceeding, and take it extremely ill, that I should be made to appear in so scandalous and cruel a contrivance. What can you lay to the young woman's charge? You had no power to hurt her.' Dear sir, let me speak,' interrupted Miss Peggy, 'I would not hurt her. I had no such design: I pity her, and will serve her; but her husband is a vile wretch, who deserves punishment. I know him to be such, yet would, if I could screen him from justice, that I might escape the censure of revengeful.' She then told all I have related of her contrivance, and they were not without hopes that the flight of this man would be of the same effect as if they had forced him to come to an agreement. She, with the permission of her mamma, went that very evening to quiet the fears of the wretched Cleora, and again to offer her succour. She found her preparing to leave the house, though hardly able to stand: her husband had left an order that she should be stripped of every thing, and as he had not discharged what he owed for rent, the people were very much in a hurry to fulfill their commission. The sight of Miss Williams renewed her terrors; she already fancied herself in a place of confinement, and it was a considerable time before she could be brought to believe that it was not for her the men lay in wait: however, the tender-hearted Peggy's restoring to her the apparel of which she had been stripped, a little regained her confidence.

Miss

Miss Williams talked to her in a manner most proper to soothe her cares, but the unfortunate Cleora begged her to leave her, with an earnestness that seemed inspired by some fatal resolution. This greatly affected Miss Peggy; she intreated her to tell her, what it was that most oppressed her mind. The poor woman answered, with much agitation, that an important moment was near, in which it was very likely she should be called to answer for all her follies. 'Leave me dear, miss leave me,' added she; 'promise but to grant my next request, and I have all I wish on this side the grave.' 'I will leave you,' returned Miss Peggy, 'on one condition, if you will give me your word to make no attempt on your life.' 'Indeed madam,' she answered, 'I have no such design; miserable as I am, and more miserable as I am like to be, I have hopes of forgiveness, which I shall never, while I have my senses, deprive myself of by such rashness: but I once more intreat you to leave me; you shall hear from me in a very little time; though I am too much oppressed by a sense of shame, ever willing to see you more. Your goodness makes me hate my self.' It grew late, and Cleora's assurances having dissipated Miss Williams's fear of her attempting her life, she left her, and returned home.

C H A P. VI.

Miss Williams receives a very extraordinary present.

CLEORA's brother had been several weeks out of town; but Miss Williams resolved not to defer, till his return, her good offices toward a reconciliation between him and his unhappy sister. She applied herself, two or three days after that in which she had seen Cleora, to the young lady he courted, and prevailed with her to be the advocate and friend of this unfortunate woman. While she was absent, a woman brought a large band-box, directed to Miss Williams; the footman carried it to his lady, and was dispatched back to the messenger, to ask from whence she came; but

but lo! she was departed without taking leave. A little motion that raised the lid of the box instantly suggested to Mrs. Williams the cause of her want of ceremony; she cut the list with which it was tied, and there appeared a very small female infant, wrapped in clean flannel; a strange present for a young unmarried lady! The child was taken out of the box, and Mrs. Williams was holding it at the fire, when Miss Peggy came home. The officers of the parish were sent for to take charge of the little creature, and followed the young lady into the parlour, while the servants stood laughing without. She was not a little astonished at all these odd appearances; but was much more so, when her mother told her of her new charge; she was extremely fond of children, and felt a tender kind of pity for this poor babe; she took it in her arms, and was going with reluctance to give it to the man, who waited to carry it to a parish-nurse, when a pin in its covering hurt her hand; she sat down to remove it, lest it might harm the child; in undoing this she waked the infant: its cries still softened her heart, and she grew more loath to part with it. She asked very particularly concerning the usage it would meet with; and the answer the man returned still increased her backwardness to let it go. Her mamma pleaded the hurt it might do her own reputation, to seem so tenderly concerned for a new-born infant; this thought fixed her wavering resolution, and she arose herself to deposite the little innocent in its paste board cradle; but taking up some linen rags that lay at the bottom, there dropped from amongst them a letter; this, as it was directed to her, she opened in a great flutter, and found the contents ran thus.

MADAM,

THE wretched, the guilty Cleora, lays this helpless infant at your feet: bereft of friends by my folly, I am unable to provide for it. It is not, to my shame I own it, is not my husband's. He has avoided my bed ever since my return to England. O, madam!

let

' let the shocking griefs I have already indured, the
 ' wretched poverty I am now in, almost without the
 ' necessities of life, incline your heart to forgiveness,
 ' though I confess Mr. Trueman the father of the poor
 ' innocent. My cruel husband, with a malicious plea-
 ' sure, hoped for this proof of my guilt, and on that
 ' account the more easily suffered the trial to be defer-
 ' red : succour my child, and you disappoint his views.
 ' No interest can make me abandon my infant ; if you
 ' deny it support, I must publish my shame, by ac-
 ' knowledging its real father. Your bounty enabled
 ' me to engage my messenger to secrecy, and from her
 ' I shall have certain intelligence of what is done for
 ' my unhappy babe. As the dear little creature is near
 ' two months before its time, it will not perhaps live
 ' to be acquainted with its mother's crimes. Dear ma-
 ' dam, I have a thousand fond ideas, that I have hi-
 ' therto been unacquainted with, ideas that are the
 ' source of joy to innocent mothers ; but to me of the
 ' deepest affliction ; and did you this moment know
 ' the pangs I suffer, you would, notwithstanding all
 ' your detestation of crimes like mine, and the aggra-
 ' vation of my guilt to you in particular, pity a
 ' wretched woman, whose conscience adds sharpness
 ' to the stings of poverty. O could I be assured my
 ' child would be protected by your sheltering hand, I
 ' would hide myself from reproach in some distant
 ' country. I long, yet dread, to see my brother ; tell
 ' him, his miserable sister, in spite of all her griefs,
 ' rejoices at his prospect of happiness ; but will keep
 ' herself concealed, lest the amiable Felicia should
 ' think an alliance with a creature so mean and guilty,
 ' a dishonour. I intreat you, if your benevolence in-
 ' clines you to succour my child, to keep her birth a
 ' secret from the world, till you can, in some happy
 ' moment, engage the pity of her father to shield her
 ' helpless innocence. The performance of this task
 ' will, I know it will, highly as he values Miss Wil-
 ' liams, increase his esteem. Grant my wishes, and
 ' be entitled to the everlasting gratitude of

' The miserable

O

' CLEORA.'

When

When Miss Peggy had run over this supplicating epistle, she put it in the hands of her mother, and retired for a moment, to hide her concern from the man who waited for the infant. Her mamma followed, and it was agreed between them that, to avoid all suspicion, they should suffer the child to be carried away. An old servant of Mr. Le Brun's was employed by Mrs. Williams to find out the place to which it was carried, and was ordered to seek for a nurse, to whom he was to deliver it as his own. The parish was easily prevailed on to part with it, and the poor infant was soon in good hands.

Mean while, its unhappy mother having exhausted her little strength in writing the above letter, and being in want of the comforts necessary for her weak condition, was on the brink of the grave, and too low to feel either parental tenderness or fear: however, the charity of the woman with whom she lodged, who was herself a widow in necessitous circumstances, was a relief that kept her from absolutely perishing. This woman was ignorant of her having been so lately delivered of a child; for nature had been her only midwife; and the woman who had been employed to carry the band-box, and who lived in an adjoining room, believing Cleora would die, and being afraid of being called to an account for leaving the child at a gentleman's house, quitted her lodgings, as soon as she had received her promised reward. It was near three weeks before the poor creature was able to crawl down stairs. Her landlady had received an unexpected supply of money, and had for several days been extremely kind to her. This charitable creature she found in great dejection, on account of her being in danger of losing a child she nursed; for the infant was ill, and stood in need of a wet nurse to preserve its life. 'Ah! who will take such care of my poor wretched friend-
'less babe?' was the language of Cleora's heart, though she durst not give it utterance. The cry of the child in the cradle pierced her very soul, as it brought to her remembrance the sound that had raised her terror and tenderness, when she sent away her own little girl; but

but how was every softening idea heightened, when, on the nurse's taking up the child, she beheld it drest in the very cloaths she had laid at the bottom of the band-box! it was with difficulty she restrained herself so far as not to press it to her bosom, in an extasy of maternal fondness. In spite of all her endeavours to the contrary, she shed over it a shower of tears; in excuse for which she told the woman, that the infant brought to her remembrance a child of her own, whom it resembled.

As Cleora was extremely fond and careful of the child, the nurse almost intirely intrusted it to her care, and as she had not lost her milk, she had many opportunities every day of giving it, without observation, the sustenance it wanted, from her own breasts. The mention of the child's father, excited Cleora to inquire from whom the nurse received it, and was accountable for its maintenance; but all her questions procured her no information, since the woman could only inform her, that a plain man gave her four guineas before hand, and carried her to a tradesman of repute, who promised to see her paid, if she did her duty. Cleora, by her officiousness about the infant, rendered herself useful to the nurse, and she was so far from grieving at her humble situation, that she was thankful to providence for this unexpected opportunity of hiding her shame, and, at the same time, fulfilling the duty of a mother.

C H A P. VII.

Mr. Trueman quarrels, fights, and is disarmed.

WE left Trueman preparing to return to town, in consequence of a letter he had received from his attorney, which informed him that his antagonist had neglected some necessary form, and by that neglect had rendered all he had already done against him of no avail.

This letter my readers will readily believe gave him considerable satisfaction; he set out for London, and

Mrs. Middleton, by his permission, left Yorkshire a day or two before him, as she had a desire to see her own country once more before she died. He took this opportunity to pay a visit to Mrs. Saunders, who had been prevented from writing to her friends for some time, by the joyful occurrence of giving her spouse an heir to his estate. When he arrived at the Grove, the lady was not yet released from her chamber; but Mr. Saunders received him in the most friendly manner; and insisted on his staying that night, as it was that in which they intended to baptise their new-born son. Mr. Trueman excused himself on account of his haste to be in town; but the gentleman would take no denial, and he was in a manner obliged to comply, tho' his uncertainty in regard to his dear Miss Williams, left him but little power of relishing any conversation of which she was not the subject. There was present at the ceremony, a gentleman who was related to Mr. Saunders, whose good sense and polite behaviour engaged the attention of Trueman, who was particularly pleased with a genteel and witty reproof he gave Mr. Saunders for swearing; but that gentleman's answer soon erased all pleasing ideas, since it was, 'Prithce, Lord Northly, leave canting, I'll be good as fast as I can.' It was with the utmost difficulty he concealed his emotion: Monstrous inconsistency, thought he within himself; an intentional murderer pretends to be concerned for the interest of religion and virtue! The restraint he was under did not escape the notice of his lordship, who observing his altered features, asked him, with an air of kindness, if he was not well? To this Trueman replied, in a manner barely civil, that he should be better by going into the air. This he did to gain a moment's recollection; but the officious man of quality unhinged all his thoughts, by following him into the garden; so that, when he returned to the parlour, he was nearly as ill, that is, as much disturbed as when he left it; however he strove to hide his disorder, and sat down with the gentlemen to a bowl of punch. He by degrees recovered his temper, and his lordship, though a very lively man, shewed

shewed such proofs of his regard to virtue and religion that Trueman began to believe it was impossible he should be the wretch he had fancied him; but these peaceable thoughts had but a short possession of his mind, which was torn with a variety of contending passions, on the man of quality's giving for his toast the charming Peggy. 'Enough, my lord,' said Trueman, rising in the utmost fury, 'if you love your life, mention not her other name.' 'Not mention it!' replied his lordship, a good deal agitated, 'not mention it! I think a lady's name ought not to be sported with in the hours of idle merriment; but thus dared, there is not a power on earth should hinder my saying, I think Miss Peggy Williams the most lovely wowan I ever beheld.' 'She has too many charms,' returned Trueman, to be thrown away on a villain and a murderer, let his titles be what they will.' This black insinuation raised a resentment in his lordship's bosom that was too great for words; and perhaps looking on Trueman as beneath his sword, he struck him a blow on the face, and bid him learn decency. This would probably have been returned with interest, as the arm of Trueman was none of the weakest, and was two or three and twenty years younger than that of the nobleman, if Mr. Saunders and the curate of the neighbouring village, who were present, had not joined their force to restrain his uplifted hand. The Lord Northly, whose greatest fault was being extremely passionate, was almost instantly sensible of the folly and brutality of his behaviour; but false shame and mean pride made him loth to make any condescensions to a man so much younger, and so much inferior to himself. Trueman, on his side, was not very easily moved to anger; but when he was so, his resentment was of no very short duration: he left the Grove, fully resolved to make this hot man of quality sensible that no one should strike him with impunity, though Mr. Saunders and the clergyman made use of all their endeavours to appease, or detain him.

Mr. Trueman, as he was a man of thought and reflection, had often reasoned with himself on the subject of duelling, and had as often condemned the barbarous custom; but then it was the head argued, while the heart was at peace: but now, with his mind torn with anger, love, and affronted pride, was it likely he could attend to the calm dictates of reason? No, he went into the first publick-house he could find, and wrote the following note to the Lord Northly:

‘ My Lord,
 ‘ **T**HE man would but ill deserve to be the avowed protector of the lovely Miss Williams, who could tamely put up a blow. Had I not been hindered by your friends, I should have returned the insult on the spot where I received it. If you would not have me believe you a mean wretch that durst not look danger in the face, meet me without attendants behind the Parsonage house, exactly at three to-morrow morning. If you fail, expect to be treated, notwithstanding your high sounding title, as you deserve, by

‘ The injured,

‘ JOS. TRUEMAN.’

This note was delivered to his lordship’s servant, to whom Trueman had directed it, under cover, to avoid suspicion; and he gave it his master, without having the least notion of its contents, believing it to be only a begging epistle. Lord Northly was alone, when he received it; for as the passion he had been in rendered him unfit for company, he had retired early to his chamber; his anger was now subsided, and he was ashamed of the manner in which he had treated poor Trueman, whom he thought an agreeable, and deserving young gentleman: but this bold challenge was what he did not in the least expect. This gentleman, when abroad, had been engaged by the warmth of his temper in an affair of the same kind, which though he came off with honour, and wounded his adversary, without being hurt himself, it imbittered many months of

of his life: he now recollected the horrors he felt while his friend was in danger, and the solemn vow he then made to despise the tyranny of custom, rather than again feel the exquisite anguish that tortured his soul, while he considered himself among the black catalogue of murderers.

It was now eleven o'clock, and the angry Trueman had not given the least intimation where he might be found before the hour of assignation: his lordship was therefore reduced to the necessity of meeting him, or of being exposed to insult. He chose the first, though determined not to draw his sword, except in his own defence. Indeed his skill in the use of the weapon inspired him with hopes of making no contemptible figure in the eyes of Trueman, even tho' he avoided bloodshed.

While Lord Northly was forming these pacific resolutions, Trueman was very ill at ease in a paltry alehouse. He had no sooner sent away his note, than the reflections of his cooler hours appeared in their full force. The condition he should soon be in, whether conquered or a conqueror, gave almost equal horror to his mind. In this distress the thoughts of Miss Williams sat near his heart. When he made his will, on his going abroad, her humble situation rendered his fortune a real benefit: but her own splendid circumstances now made it a mere trifle. These considerations induced him to make a new will: there was in this transaction a little of the jealousy of the lover, for the thought of Lord Northly's becoming the husband of his beloved Peggy, was the first inducement to this alteration. This new will he penned himself, as well as his disturbed spirits would let him, and called his landlord and his servant to be the witnesses to it. The awful solemnity of Trueman's look, and the odd incident of a young gentleman's writing his own will in the dead of the night, gave the sagacious host and his servant apprehensions that he was mad; but as he ordered his horse to be ready by three in the morning, they ventured to watch his vagaries, without calling in the assistance of their neighbours. At two Mr. Trueman lay down,

to avoid the impertinent curiosity of the landlord; who in terror for a large glass that hung in the room where he was writing, was almost continually looking in at the door. A few minutes before the time of appointment he arose, in intolerable distress; his conscience condemning the very action he was about to commit. His life he valued at nought, and would cheerfully have laid it down, for the defence of his friend, his country, or his religion, but to sacrifice it to the opinions of an ill-judging world, or to have that of another to answer for, struck at all the rooted principles of his education: yet to court reproach, to be despised, and perhaps to be despised by his dear Peggy, was what he could not bear to think of with the least patience: and he sallied from the house with a wildness in his look, that confirmed his landlord in the belief that he was out of his senses.

He went to the place of appointment, where he found his lordship waiting for him.

‘I began to believe, sir,’ said the peer, with an easy calm countenance, ‘by your being past your time, you had thought better on it, than to hazard life on this foolish quarrel: suppose you are victorious, is premeditated murder a just retribution for the hasty effects of unguarded passion? You mistake me sir,’ continued his lordship, ‘if you imagine I am afraid of your sword: fatal experience has taught me but too well how to wield one; yet I own I wish not to meet you on these terms, especially in this place.’ ‘My lord, my lord,’ replied Trueman eagerly, ‘you ought to be more careful of committing injuries, since you have not spirit enough to answer for them when committed. If this place offends your nicety, I’ll attend you where you please.’ ‘If nothing will serve,’ returned his lordship, drawing his sword, ‘to convince you that I am influenced by other motives than fear, I will endeavour to defend myself, if you are hardy enough to risk your own life in aiming at mine; tho’ I once more tell you, whatever is the consequence, it shall be all your own seeking.’ Will you ask my pardon for the blow you gave me?’

‘Will

‘ Will you promise never to pursue Miss Williams with your addresses ?’ asked Trueman, with some haughtiness. ‘ You are insolent, young man,’ returned his lordship, ‘ and must be chastized.’ He then addressed himself as if to fight ; but only warded off Trueman’s sword, without the least attempt to hurt him. He, vexed at being treated with such apparent contempt, grew enraged, and rushing on his enemy, with more courage than skill, was disarmed, though not till he had given his lordship a wound, which bled pretty much. Shame and vexation were painted strongly on Trueman’s countenance, when the peer generously returned him his sword, saying, ‘ Wear it, sir, for a better cause. I esteem you for this daring ; the blow I gave you is revenged by this blood. Miss Williams herself, has long ago quashed all my hopes.’

Humanity forbid that rage should longer have place in a heart like Trueman's; he intreated his lordship to be careful of his wound, and offered himself to bind it up. In this office he was employed, when his lordship accidentally casting his eye on a knife, with which Trueman was scraping some lint from his neckcloth, asked, with an appearance of amazement, where he had it? 'From a poor wretch, I found dying, near my own house in Yorkshire,' returned Trueman. 'That knife was once mine,' was answered, 'it has my arms on it; the man you seem to pity was a detestable villain, whom I loath to remember, though I once loved him with the affection of a father; but if he is now numbered among the dead, be his crimes forgot.' 'If there is none living that has a share in those crimes,' replied Trueman, 'it is fit they should be so; but he confessed to me, his being a villain of so deep a die, that if he had any accomplices they ought to be hunted from the earth, for the good of mankind, let their condition in life be ever so superior. Great names, my lord, add no dignity to murder!' 'Again, sir,' replied the peer, 'you seem to point at me. I think in this case, at least, I must be innocent; however, I court your utmost search, and shall not be easy till you tell me what

‘ what you mean. I intreat you to return with me to
 ‘ Mr. Saunders’s : the occasion of our meeting shall
 ‘ remain a secret, and it shall be your fault, if from
 ‘ this time we are not the most intimate friends.

Trueman, who could not very easily get rid of a bad impression, was not quite so forward in his offers of friendship as the peer, and declined renewing his visit; however, he waited on his lordship to the garden-gate.

C H A P. VIII.

In which Trueman acquires a new relation, and new prospects.

TRueman was taking his leave of lord Northly, when the sight of Mrs. Middleton, who was talking to the gardener in great emotion, raised his attention: both the gentlemen heard her say, ‘ Are you sure, Peter, you are not mistaken? are you sure his name was Gyles, before he was a lord? Oh what would I give, that master had not gone away last night?’ ‘ Do you know this woman?’ asked the nobleman. ‘ She is my servant,’ was replied, ‘ but the reason of her wishing me here, I am intirely unacquainted with.’ ‘ I must speak to her,’ returned his lordship. ‘ I have somewhere seen her, and it seems she knows me. I beseech you call her to you, and ask her what she means.’

Mrs. Middleton, on the first sound of her master’s voice, left the man she was talking to, and came to him, saying, ‘ For heaven’s sake, sir, what do you do up at this early hour? They told me you was gone, I wanted to see you. The servants told me last night you had a quarrel with one of their master’s visitors. What means those spots of blood on your face? Ah! sir, I am terrified to death, oh! ease my fears. The gardener whispered to me that he had let out the gentleman you quarrelled with an hour ago: where is he now?’ ‘ Here,’ answered his lordship, unable to forbear smiling at the disorder of
 the

the affectionate old woman; 'here I am, safe, and more your master's friend than I ever was his enemy.' She no sooner heard his lordship's voice than she left her master, for her fears had so engrossed her thoughts, that she saw him not before: she gazed eagerly in his face, and after standing for a moment in a silent attention, cried, 'It is, it must be him! yet how altered! how different! Molly Greenfield herself, were she alive, would hardly know him.' Molly Greenfield,' replied my lord, 'is a name I well remember: the dear creature that owned it was the delight and joy of my life; but what interest can you have to remind me of her now, when she has been many years in her grave? My conscience stung me this morning on sight of her father's house; I did not expect a living witness too, to reprove me.' 'I have the interest of the best of masters, of the best of friends,' returned Mrs. Middleton. 'O, sir! look on me, I am that Sally you so often trusted to give letters to my dear mistress; that Sally that refused your five guineas to let you into her room.' 'I recollect you now,' said his lordship; 'but was it necessary my weakness should be thus talked of before this gentleman?' 'Oh, sir! believe me,' replied the old woman, 'this young man has a tender concern in all I say; look in his face; he is, if the word of my dying mistress is to be believed, he is your own son.' 'Good God!' cried Trueman, extremely moved, 'have I lifted my hand against, have I wounded my father?' 'If I am indeed your father,' said his lordship, 'which you must give me leave to doubt, till I have stronger proofs, you have nothing to reproach yourself with; for I merited the scratch you gave me: but if this good woman can make out your claim, I shall take pride in such a son.' 'I have my proofs in my trunk,' said Mrs. Middleton: 'it is at the curate's, where I lay last night. I brought them with an intent to leave them with him, as I grow old, and can't hope to live long. Tell me where I shall see you, and I'll fetch them immediately. Let me but fulfil my promise to
' my

‘ my dying mistress, and see my poor master happy, and I care not how soon I leave a bad world.’ His lordship, as he wanted no witnesses to a scene like this, was at some loss what place to appoint, till Trueman thought of the widow Hodgskins’s house, where she still lived. At this house, as it was but a little walk from the Grove, he readily consented to meet them, and they separated for a short time, his lordship going to his friend’s house, Trueman to the widow’s cottage, and Mrs. Middleton to fetch her papers.

The uneasy suspense of the two gentlemen, did not permit them to taste much satisfaction in the company of their friends: as soon as breakfast was over they met, and every doubt vanished from the mind of the lord Northly, when Mrs. Middleton gave into his hands, and he had perused, the following paper.

‘ O my Gyles! before this comes to your sight, all earthly considerations will be to me no more. It is for the sake of my child I wish to be remembered. I conjure you by humanity, by all the principles of justice, to shield the boy from the miseries he is likely to sustain from my unforgiving husband. The world believes him his son; but my conscience, sir, would not let me deceive Mr. Trueman in a point of such importance. He was acquainted with my condition before I married, and I should have had a grateful sense of his saving me from reproach and shame, if his daily upbraiding had not imbibtered my life, as well as shortened it. I am now in the near prospect of the grave, an awful, though to me a desirable situation; recollect my education, recollect the pains my dear father took to implant in our minds a love of truth; recollect, I beseech you to recollect, the whole tenor of my life, in the five happy years we lived together. If you can remember me, I am guilty of one known falsehood, of one intentional deceit, I expect not to be believed, when I say, that the poor child, who at the time of my writing this, lives with my brother James Greenfield, and is called Joshua Trueman, after the name

' name of my husband, is your son. Heaven, I hope,
 ' has accepted my sincere repentance of the crime to
 ' which he owes his birth. My life falls a sacrifice to
 ' my imprudent folly ; but as I hope to be forgiven, I
 ' sincerely forgive you your share in my past distresses.
 ' O my Gyles, in the world I am going to, the beg-
 ' gar and the prince find equal favour ; there at least
 ' I trust we shall meet without fear of a separation,
 ' when the little low distinctions of earth are ceased
 ' for ever. The faithful creature with whom I in-
 ' trust this paper, has my orders not to deliver it into
 ' any hand but your own ; that you may have no
 ' doubt of her truth, I subjoin, as well as my trem-
 ' bling fingers will let me, a line or two, which you
 ' know it is impossible should be counterfeited.' Then
 there followed, wrote in characters known only to
 themselves, and with which they used to disguise
 what they wrote to each other, a solemn protestation
 of her being with child before her marriage, and then
 she appealed to the register of the parish, for the time
 of her son's birth, after which was added, ' Let me
 ' intreat you, sir, if this comes to your hands before
 ' the child is grown up, to enable my brother to edu-
 ' cate him. He will spare you the shame of owning
 ' the poor innocent ; but is unable to provide for him.
 ' All the reparation you can now make for my loss of
 ' honour, peace, and life, is to save my child from the
 ' miseries of ignorance and poverty. If ever I was
 ' dear to you ; if ever you meant what you said, when
 ' you deplored our different circumstances as a mis-
 ' fortune, be just, be kind to the unhappy boy. A
 ' mother's fondness makes me see in him the dawns
 ' of a thousand good qualities ; let a father's love give
 ' him the power of exerting them, and be all my in-
 ' juries forgot. If the happy are permitted to know
 ' what passes on earth, my soul shall bless you for
 ' this act of justice : Believe me, sir, when I tell you,
 ' that though eternity is before me, your happiness,
 ' your everlasting happiness is near my heart ; that your
 ' unkindness and cruelty to me may be forgiven, will
 ' be

‘ be the sincere wish of my soul, the few remaining
‘ days given to the wretched

‘ MARY TRUEMAN.’

When the lord Northly had done reading, he gave it to Trueman, saying, ‘ Your mother, who was above deceit or falsehood, in this paper calls you my son; from this moment I esteem you such, but wish both for your sake and my own, the relation betwixt us may remain a secret. I will not ask for proofs of your being that child who lived with Mr. James Greenfield; let not the strong desire I have to love, and to be beloved by you, lose all its merit; I would not in the father lose the friend.’ ‘ O, sir!’ returned Trueman, after he had run over his mother’s letter, ‘ will you, can you forgive the unnatural wound my fury gave you?’ ‘ Forgive you,’ replied his lordship, ‘ why I tell you, I love you for your bravery. Had you been calm under such a provocation, the letter I have just read would have wanted proofs to have convinced me, that you were indeed my son; or, at least, I should wish to disbelieve it: but let the first instance of your obedience be, your going with me to my friend Saunders. I will, if I can find an opportunity there, let you know in what manner I propose to act for your interest. Merit like yours must not be buried in obscurity.’ ‘ Ah, sir!’ said Trueman sighing, ‘ I wish not for a splendid station; could my being favoured and esteemed by you give me any hopes of being accepted by Miss Williams, I might indeed be happy; but the most elevated condition without her, would have few charms for me.’ ‘ You forget,’ said his lordship, smiling, ‘ that I myself am in love with the young lady. I ought to have made you resign all pretensions to my mistress, before I returned your sword; however, you may set your heart at rest: as I am well convinced Miss Williams will never consent to be my wife, I will try to be related to her some way or other, and therefore will resign all my interest to you; but, as I suppose you have had a quarrel, it
‘ will

‘ will require some precautions : besides, her mother, ‘ I’m informed, wishes her not to marry at all.’

They then went together to Mr. Saunders’s, when the intimacy that appeared betwixt his lordship and Trueman was so astonishing, that Mr. Saunders could not help enquiring into its cause, when my lord giving high encomiums on the valour of the young gentleman, told him of the challenge, saying, he met Trueman without enmity, but was far from the hopes of making the best of all acquisitions, that of a valuable friend. ‘ Nay,’ continued his lordship, ‘ I not only profess myself Mr. Trueman’s friend ; but I cease from this moment being his rival.’ Mr. Saunders enquired very particularly into the nature of the combat, and expressed some surprize at Trueman’s coming off unhurt from so able a swordsman as lord Northly. Trueman gave the praise it deserved to his lordship’s humanity, and mentioned the cut he had given him, in terms of lamentation. Mr. Saunders insisted on a surgeon being sent for, but could not prevail on the peer, who treated it as a scratch of no consequence ; however, he at last permitted his wound to be examined by Mrs. Saunders, who, during the time she lived retired, had made physic and surgery the study of some of her leisure hours, in order to be useful to the poor around her. The lady had not yet been out of her room, so they dispensed with ceremony, and waited on her in it ; when she opened the wound the colour gave her not a little surprize, since the whole arm appeared of a dark blue ; the cut was indeed a meer trifle, but the skin being of such an extraordinary hue, made Mrs. Saunders doubtful of her skill, and she joined with her spouse in wishing for a surgeon. His lordship remained obstinate, and having cast his eye on it, burst into a hearty laugh, telling them the livid appearance that gave them such terrible apprehensions, was only the stains of a new blue handkerchief that he had wrapped round his arm.

As their meeting was now no secret, and they had not the least dread of the consequence, lord Northly insisted on Trueman’s staying with him till the
next

next day. This he was the more inclined to do, as Mrs. Saunders herself joined in the request with some importunity. He hoped to hear from that lady the situation of his Peggy's heart, as he knew she was her most intimate friend.

Lord Northly took the first opportunity, in which he was alone with Trueman, to enquire into all the particulars of his finding and relieving the person from whom he had the knife. When he had told the manner in which the poor wretch behaved, and the horror he expressed for his past actions, his lordship, with a deep sigh, said, 'Heaven I hope, has forgiven him; and I wish no more to remember his crimes. Yet to me, his friend and patron, he was a monster.' 'Forgive me, sir,' said Trueman, 'if I confess I once harboured a suspicion, that he was a base assassin, sent to murder me.' 'You!' returned his lordship: 'why, what quarrel could you have brought on yourself, to give you so unaccountable a fear?' 'I loved Miss Williams,' replied Trueman, 'and the day I saw the person we are talking of, I found this paper, which let me know that your lordship was become my rival. The dying man confirmed my suggestions of his being sent to take away my life, by mentioning your name, when he owned himself a villain; crying, If my friend, my benefactor, had never seen her, I should now have been innocent and happy.' 'He told you truth,' replied his lordship: 'I was indeed his friend and benefactor; I loved him with the tenderness of a parent; but the unhappy wretch, unmindful of all his obligations, sought my life. He was the son of a common sailor, who performed wonders before he lost his life in an engagement at sea; and my uncle who was captain of the vessel, in consideration of the valour of this brave fellow, gave his widow a handsome present, and took from her her little boy, intending to bring him up in a station beyond what he might expect from the meanness of his birth. This relation of mine dying soon after, the care of his education devolved on me. I knew my uncle's intentions in his favour, and therefore, notwithstanding his

his dying too suddenly to make a will, I did not think
 myself at liberty to abandon the child. What I at first
 did out of duty, I soon found a strong inclination to
 perform. By the time the boy was ten years old, I
 came to England ; my father and two elder brothers
 were dead during my absence, and there was now
 only the life of my grandfather, who was turned of
 eighty, and his eldest son, an old bachelor, between
 me and a large estate and title. My surviving uncle
 lived but two months after my return, when his lord-
 ship, my grandfather, looking on me as the only
 hopes of his family, insisted on my coming to Scot-
 land to see him. I went, and took with me my little
 pupil. I continued there near six years before the
 earl died, and as I really loved the child, who was a
 lad of excellent natural parts, I made his instruction
 the diversion, and almost the whole business of my
 life. My being torn in my youth from the dear
 mistress of my choice, had an unhappy effect on my
 temper. In the first agony of my disappointment,
 I had made a rash vow never to marry, and all my
 grandfather's remonstrances against the folly of such
 a resolution, as my heart was yet disengaged, did
 not get the better of my obstinacy. I wished not to
 love, so kept at a distance from the gay assemblies of
 the fair, and passed among the few with whom I con-
 versed, for a mighty dull fellow ; for preferring the
 delight of study, and the employment of a school-
 master to an obscure boy, to all the pleasures I might
 receive from the many bright circles that my future
 fortune and quality had tempted to wish me among
 them. I was entirely unconcerned at what the world
 thought of me, and went on my own way till the
 earl died. My boy, as I always called him, was
 sixteen ; the pains I had taken in his education, seem-
 ed not to be thrown away, and I was rejoicing in the
 fruits of my labour, when I discovered that my young
 gentleman, by an unhappy itch for gaming, had gone
 beyond my allowance, and was pretty deep in debt.
 As I thought the best means of curing the distemper,
 would be to take him from the place where he caught
 it,

‘ it, I gave him a sum sufficient to pay the rascals who
‘ had taken advantage of his inexperience and youth,
‘ and came to England ; I even carried my fondness
‘ so far as to accompany him in making the tour of
‘ Europe ; and after our coming back to our native
‘ country, for his sake entered into all the fashionable
‘ diversions of the polite world. About three years a-
‘ go I had a fit of illness, in which I made a will, and
‘ gave to this youth all I could leave from my heir at
‘ law, who must have the family estate and title, if I
‘ die without issue. This he knew, and I have been
‘ since told that his grief for my sickness subsided, as
‘ soon as he was informed the will was signed. I reco-
‘ vered, and was deaf to all that was told me of the in-
‘ gratitude of my favourite. My pride, I acknowledge,
‘ had some share in my infatuation ; I had laid out a
‘ plan for his education, which I had exactly followed,
‘ and was so secure of the success of my scheme, that I
‘ should almost have doubted of the evidence of my
‘ senses, if Tommy Reeves could be either wicked or
‘ ungrateful. A lady who is my first cousin, took some
‘ pains to cure me of this silly partiality ; and for
‘ that reason was treated by me with less good manners
‘ than her friendship deserved. I told her abruptly,
‘ that whoever endeavoured to lessen my esteem for
‘ Mr. Reeves, took the most infallible way to lose my
‘ friendship, and left her without waiting a reply. My
‘ cousin, from that moment, as she has since confes-
‘ sed to me, resolved to revenge on my favourite, the
‘ little regard I paid to her advice.

‘ As Mr. Reeves would, at my decease, be possessed
‘ of a considerable fortune, I suffered him to make a
‘ gay appearance. I was frequently his companion at an
‘ assembly or masquerade, and was no longer the sour
‘ pedant that shunned the world. Intent on introducing
‘ merit of my own rearing into society, I became once
‘ more fond of public life, and again felt the power of
‘ beauty. Miss Williams was with her mother at my
‘ cousin’s assembly ; the sensible modesty that appeared
‘ in her look, first struck my eye ; I conversed with
‘ her, with an intent, if the accomplishments of her
‘ mind answered those of her person, to propose to her
‘ mother

' mother an alliance with my beloved Reeves. The
 ' complacency with which she listened to me, and the
 ' good sense of her replies, charmed me : I forgot
 ' Reeves, and determined to pursue her on my own
 ' account. My relation now exulted in the success of
 ' her contrivance ; for she confessed, on my telling her,
 ' I was determined to pay my addresses to the young
 ' lady, that she had made many efforts to engage me in
 ' an affair of love, and invited this young beauty prin-
 ' cipally on my account ; for as she was acquainted
 ' with her grave turn of mind, she thought her more
 ' likely to please me than any lady she knew ; " But,
 ' " my lord," said she, " I can't answer for your suc-
 ' cess : miss Williams is but lately come to the know-
 ' ledge of her being intitled to a handsome fortune,
 ' " and I have been told by those who knew her, when
 ' she was in no such expectation, that her gravity is
 ' " caused by a disappointment in her first affections."
 ' I sighed both for the poor lady and myself, and in-
 ' stantly determined not to owe my happiness to any re-
 ' straint put on her inclinations, by the authority of
 ' her friends : however, I permitted my relation to
 ' make proposals to her mother ; but these proposals
 ' were rejected. I was afterwards two or three times,
 ' by accident, in company with the young lady, but she
 ' appeared so extremely reserved and dejected, that I
 ' lost all hope. My cousin was intimately acquainted
 ' with miss Williams's mother, and was often her vi-
 ' sitor ; I would fain have been allowed the privilege
 ' of accompanying her, in the character only of a
 ' common friend ; but this favour was denied me, and
 ' I own I was so much vexed at the prudery of miss
 ' Williams, for such I thought it, that I spoke to my
 ' cousin to enquire what could be the cause of my be-
 ' ing treated with so little civility ? I went to Scotland,
 ' and there received from this lady the letter you just
 ' now shewed me. Mr. Reeves was with me, and as
 ' I had met with a refusal, I had taken no notice to him
 ' of my intended courtship, and therefore did not men-
 ' tion to him the contents of this letter, which inform-
 ' ed me that miss Williams's heart had been engaged for
 ' some

‘ some years ; but that there was at that time a mis-
‘ understanding between her and her lover, and that
‘ there was no hopes of success, except a stop was put
‘ to this gentleman’s prior claim ; for miss Williams
‘ has protested, that she would never wed any other
‘ man while he was living, and unmarried. Had you
‘ read the whole, it would have been impossible you
‘ could have had any alarm from it ; for in the post-
‘ script, my cousin says she could not learn with any
‘ certainty where this favourite lover’s estate lay, or
‘ where he resided.

‘ I lost this letter soon after I received it ; but as
‘ there was nothing in it of any importance, it gave me
‘ no concern. But now my young friend, as I then
‘ thought Mr. Reeves, suddenly grew dull and melan-
‘ choly : this, as I sincerely loved him, gave me great
‘ uneasiness. I fancied he had left some woman be-
‘ hind him, with whom he was in love. This he would
‘ not acknowledge, but press’d me earnestly to come to
‘ London. With this request I complied. I travelled,
‘ as I always do, without any attendants, except one
‘ footman. Reeves lay in the same room with me, at
‘ the inn where we rested the second night of my jour-
‘ ney. I met in this house a gentleman, whom I had
‘ known abroad ; he had repeated to me a smart epi-
‘ gram, which I liked well enough to write down, and
‘ as I had no pocket-book about me, Mr. Reeves put
‘ it in his. I waked early in the morning out of a
‘ frightful dream, and could not for my life, compose
‘ myself to sleep again ; in the roving of my thoughts,
‘ my friend’s witty epigram came into my mind ; I
‘ could not recollect some of the words, and therefore
‘ got out of bed to search for it in Reeves’s pocket,
‘ not caring to wake him out of a sound sleep. In his
‘ pocket-book I found my cousin’s letter, and another
‘ from the same hand, which, though directed to me,
‘ I had never received. The daring impudence of
‘ keeping from me my friend’s letters ruffled me too
‘ much for me to think of epigrams, so I hurried into
‘ bed, and perused the letter I had not seen before, and
‘ put the other in my coat-pocket. The young man
‘ was

' was still asleep ; I was more than once tempted to
 ' leave him where I was, and keep on my journey with-
 ' out him, only letting him know by a note, that I
 ' wished to see his face no more ; for my cousin, in the
 ' letter I had just read, mentioned several strong reasons
 ' for me to believe him the very reverse of what I
 ' wished him, particularly his deluding a young crea-
 ' ture, and then leaving her to starve, in the utmost
 ' wretchedness and misery. This, as I knew his al-
 ' lowance was far from scanty, was such a proof of
 ' sordid avarice and barbarity, that it shocked me to
 ' the soul. Yet my fondness for him got so far the
 ' better of my anger, that I determined not to condemn
 ' him unheard. As I am naturally warm, I dreaded
 ' the impetuosity of my own temper, and therefore re-
 ' solved to conceal what I had seen, till reflection had
 ' made me more calm. After this, I fell into an un-
 ' easy disturbed slumber, out of which I was waked by
 ' Reeves. We set out towards London, which I in-
 ' tended to reach before I told him the reason I had to
 ' be offended ; but the uneasiness I found myself un-
 ' der, in concealing what gave me pain, induced me
 ' to alter this resolution. I sent away the fellow who
 ' attended us, a mile or two before, to provide a break-
 ' fast, and when he was gone, I began, in the gentlest
 ' manner, to reproach Reeves with ingratitude to me
 ' his benefactor and friend, and was pulling out of my
 ' riding-coat the letter he stole from me, when the
 ' execrable villain discharged a pistol that brushed my
 ' left ear. Nothing saved my life but my being stoop-
 ' ing to reach my pocket with my left-hand. I instant-
 ' ly turned, and saw the wretch going to take another
 ' pistol from his holster, when I nimbly sprung forwards
 ' on my stirrups, and tore him from his horse, and was
 ' going to rid the world of a monster, when the noise
 ' of horses diverted me from my purpose. Three
 ' gentlemen, who heard the report of the pistol, rode
 ' up to us. The vile Reeves, who had meanly begged
 ' his life the moment before, now turned my accuser,
 ' and told these men that I had attempted to murder
 ' him. Appearances were against me, for I had a
 ' loaded

loaded pistol still in my hand : two of the gentlemen, who were young men, were inclined to think me guilty ; but the third, a grave man, insisted on Reeves's telling him, in what position I was when I fired the pistol at him, which he said he escaped by miracle. He said, I was close to him, and aimed it at his left breast. On this the gentleman called out for an arrest of judgment, and begged to be heard : This gentleman, says he, meaning me, tells us that this young man fired the pistol we heard at his head when he was just behind him ; and I am inclined to believe him ; for look at his wig, I suppose both sides were made alike ; if the curl that should be here is just burnt off, the smell will inform us." The proof was plain, and this trifling incident turned them all on my side.

We conveyed the wretch to the inn where I had sent my man, and locked him in a room, while we held a consultation what should be done with him.

In this short time my heart relented, and I could not bear the thoughts of appearing against him. As the agony of my mind was too great to be concealed, one of the gentlemen took notice of my disorder, and asked me, if the unhappy wretch was related to me ? I answered, that I was as much distressed as if he was my own son, since I had adopted him for my child, and he had been near twenty years under my care. They now inveighed against him as an ungrateful monster, and blamed my foolish tenderness ; but when they had almost got the better of my reluctance, and I was ready to give orders to have him carried before a magistrate, we were alarmed by a bustle we heard in the house. My man had been telling an old woman, who was a servant in the inn, who I was, and of my kindness to Reeves ; the woman looked terrified to death, snatched one of my man's pistols, which lay on the table before which he was sitting, and ran with it to the room where the vile Reeves was confined ; and intreated him who guarded it, to let her see the young man. He unlocked the door, when she flew to him, and whispered
some-

' something in his ear. The man thinking this old
 ' woman was helping his prisoner to escape, pulled
 ' her hastily out of the room, and again locked the
 ' door. He then informed me, what he had seen, and
 ' my own servant added the circumstance of the pistol.
 ' I asked her what she wanted with Reeves? She burst
 ' into tears. I asked her for my pistol; she said she
 ' would pay for it, as she hoped in God she should ne-
 ' ver see it more. We hurried to the room, but Reeves
 ' was not to be found. The whole house was in con-
 ' fusion at his escape; but for my own part I rejoiced
 ' at my deliverance from the painful task of appearing
 ' against him. The poor old woman was threatened
 ' with being sent to jail, for screening such a villain
 ' from justice: she said she would appeal to me, and if
 ' I thought she had acted wrong, she would patiently
 ' submit; to me she was brought, when with many
 ' tears she told me her name was Eleanor Reeves; that
 ' the ungrateful monster was her own son. "O, sir!"
 she added, "I durst not for my life have said so to you
 " a month ago; but cruel as he has been to me, he is
 " my child. Could I give him up, when I knew I
 " could save him? With the pistol, I gave him a key
 " which opened a door that led to a pair of back stairs.
 "O, sir," she continued, for God's sake, leave him
 " to heaven; let him have time to repent. I ask you
 " not to forgive him; my only wish is, that neither
 " you nor I may see him more." To this wish, my
 ' heart devoutly said, Amen. The poor creature then
 ' told me of the many hardships she had suffered,
 ' and of her applying to her son some years before,
 ' who had been barbarous enough to refuse her any
 ' assistance, and threatened to have her confined as a
 ' mad woman, if she ever made herself known to me.
 ' This more than brutal inhumanity, was so shocking,
 ' that I could, villain as he proved to me, scarce believe
 ' it; but the mistress of the house gave the poor old
 ' woman an excellent character, confirmed what she
 ' said as to her name, and said she had told her of her
 ' having a son who was provided for by a lord.

' From

‘ From this moment,’ continued his lordship, ‘ I look on you in the same light I once did on the wretched Reeves; as my child, my friend, the inheritor of all I have to bestow; and I will, as soon as I get to London, put you in possession of a handsome sum.’

‘ O, sir!’ returned Trueman, with a tear of gratitude just starting, ‘ could you put me in the possession of the lovely Miss Williams, you would give me more than millions; but no addition to my fortune can console me for her loss; nor do I think my heart would be easy, even if I was accepted, while I remembered I owed her favour to a meaner motive than tenderness.’ ‘ You refine too much,’ replied his lordship, ‘ for your own happiness; a young woman may have a great affection for a man, and yet not be rash enough to run counter to the advice of her more experienced friends. I think, if she refuses to marry any other man, it is as much as you ought to expect.’

C H A P. IX.

A very short one.

TOward the close of the evening, Trueman received a message from Mrs. Saunders to attend her, while my lord and her spouse were gone to a gentleman’s seat in the neighbourhood. He followed the messenger with precipitation, hoping to hear news of his dear Peggy. This good-natured lady satisfied his impatience, by putting into his hand a letter she had just received, saying, ‘ Now, Mr. Trueman, I am sure of having your company a little longer; but what shall we do with his lordship?’ The sight of the direction made what Mrs. Saunders said intirely disregarded by Trueman; he hastily unfolded the letter, and read these few following lines, wrote by Miss Williams.

‘ My

‘ My dear Friend,

‘ I Hope to be with you to-morrow or next day. I
 ‘ could not satisfy myself without coming to wish
 ‘ you joy: I should have done so before, but your
 ‘ servant Nicholas told me he was going to Lord
 ‘ Northly with an invitation. I did not know he was
 ‘ of your acquaintance, or I should before now have
 ‘ informed you that he was among the number of my
 ‘ persecutors. I am now at Grangeby-house, near se-
 ‘ venteen miles from you; to-morrow morning I at-
 ‘ tend as bride-maid on an intimate friend; yet will,
 ‘ if possible, get loose in the afternoon to wait on my
 ‘ dear Mrs. Saunders. Contrive to be alone, for I
 ‘ have a thousand things to communicate; but I in-
 ‘ treat you, not one word in favour of him who has
 ‘ not courage or love enough to speak for himself. I
 ‘ wish to forget him; and am

‘ Most sincerely yours,

‘ M. WILLIAMS.’

When Trueman had run over this short epistle, he returned it the lady with a sigh, and with a dejected look said, ‘ Miss Williams, madam, little knows my heart, when she attributes my silence to want of love; but I own myself coward enough to be afraid of her contempt. She has forbid your being my advocate, and I intreat you, madam, to obey her. I shall attend Lord Northly to London, and we set out early in the morning.’ The coolness with which Trueman spoke this last sentence, greatly astonished Mrs. Saunders, who expected he would have been in raptures on the hopes of so soon seeing his mistress; but his pride was offended at her wishing to forget him, and he determined to consult with his lordship about the manner of introducing himself. The return of the gentlemen prevented Mrs. Saunders’s letting him know how much she was displeased with his indifference; however, when the Lord Northly talked of going the next morning, she made no attempt to detain either him or Trueman.

When Trueman communicated to his lordship the news of Miss Williams's designed visit at the Grove, he found he was already apprised of it by Mr. Saunders. That gentleman was apprehensive, that the sight of the young lady might revive the passion of his old friend, and again cause a quarrel between him and Trueman; but his lordship quickly made him easy on that head, by assuring him, that he was so far from being Mr. Trueman's rival, that he should sincerely rejoice, if it was in his power to bring about a reconciliation between him and Miss Williams, and that he was ready to support his pretensions with all his influence, and a considerable part of his fortune. This discourse Mr. Saunders repeated to his lady; and she, ever mindful of the satisfaction of her friends, told Lord Northly he would, in all probability, never have a better opportunity to serve Trueman, since Miss Williams was now at the seat of Sir Jacob Gyles, his cousin. 'I am indeed related to him,' replied his lordship; 'but at present there is a misunderstanding betwixt us; however, for the interest of my dear Trueman, to-morrow I'll wait on her ladyship. In that family the grey mare is the better horse, as I think it ought every-where to be the case, where a man is weak enough to marry a woman who has four times as much sense as himself. My managing kinswoman is by no means blind to her own interest, and we single men, who have every thing to leave behind us, have great influence; I therefore make no doubt of meeting with a complaisant reception. If you will,' he continued, speaking to Trueman, 'I'll introduce you to Miss Williams, as my friend, who is her equal in fortune, and is deeply in love with her.' 'No, my lord,' returned Mr. Trueman; 'though I have the most grateful sense of your lordship's goodness, I cannot consent even to gain an interview by the interest of another. If my Peggy consents to see me in quality of a lover, while she believes herself a stranger to my person, I shall have lost all hope; for not all my faults could make me overlook such an indelicacy. I must owe my happiness

ness to kind consenting love, or I must be miserable. If the honour of your lordship's friendship can influence Miss Williams's relations, you will be intitled to my everlasting gratitude; but she herself must have no motive superior to her own tenderness.'

Lord Northly smiled at this extraordinary refinement; but Mrs. Saunders replied very gravely, she was sure Miss Williams would not be behind hand with Mr. Trueman in delicacy; but she saw no reason why he might not be introduced to her as a friend of his lordship, or as her friend, without any mention being made of his designing to commence her admirer. 'You men,' she added, 'think we can neither feel affection or gratitude to the other sex, without falling in love, as it is called. Sure Miss Williams may be willing to see a gentleman who, she is told, I have sent to her, without raising either the contempt or jealousy of the most scrupulous lover: Such an introduction, will, I apprehend, be attended with the happiest consequence, if the surprise is not too much for my poor friend; but I almost dread to run the hazard, and on second thoughts, now I have the honour to be of your counsel, I advise his lordship to go without you, and bring Miss Williams here, that I may be near her at this important interview. This was agreed to, both by my lord Northly and Trueman. And as the discourse of Mrs. Saunders had very considerably alleviated the chagrin of the last, he retired to rest, full of the most pleasing expectations.

C H A P. X.

The reconciliation. A love-scene.

THE next morning lord Northly and Mrs. Saunders set out early for the seat of Sir Jacob Gyles, while Trueman staid at the Grove, in expectation of their return with Miss Williams; but two or three hours after they were gone, a messenger arrived, dispatched, as he said, from London, with an order for Miss Williams to return to town immediately, as her

mother was taken extremely ill, and wanted to see her. This man was immediately sent to the young lady, and Trueman found all his hopes postponed; but as Mrs. Saunders had given him the strongest assurances that his Peggy's heart was still his own, he bore his disappointment with tolerable calmness.

About five in the evening, when Trueman believed Miss Williams on her journey to London, a chariot entered the court-yard, out of which stepped a lady, handed by lord Northly, and a coach followed quite full, attended by several gentlemen on horseback.

Trueman, prepossessed that his Peggy was far from him, gave but a slight attention to the company, and was for retiring, till a pair of fine blue eyes struck him motionless, at the window where he stood. 'Tis she, madam, 'tis she, he would have said; but the faltering accents died away on his tongue, and his Peggy was in the room before he could recover himself. Mr. Saunders, as he saw Trueman at the window, had, with a design to defeat all their well-laid schemes, led her into that room. His back was towards the door when she entered; but the moment he heard her speak he turned. The instant she beheld his face, her own lost all its colour; she was for going out of the room; but he, with the most beseeching look, seized her hand, and intreated her to hear him. She trembled; he led her to a chair; she attempted to disengage herself, while the softness of her look gave him courage to plead his own cause: in short, a few moments convinced him, that he was still dear to her, since she no longer endeavoured to withdraw her hand; and on his saying her being so much his superior made him almost hopeless; she replied, with some emotion: 'I dare not give you hope; you have taken too little care to deserve it.' As she spoke, a few tears dropped on her hand. He raised his eyes to hers, and her hand to his lips, and cried in a transport of tenderness. 'Tell me, my dearest Peggy, that you can, that you will forgive me, and a whole life of gratitude shall render us both happy: be above your sex in despising dissimulation, as you are in charms.' Her face and neck were

were of a deep crimson ; she remained silent ; he pressed her to speak. At last she said, dropping her head on his shoulder, ‘ O Trueman, I forgive, and wish you happy.’ But will you make me so, my charming, by becoming mine ;’ he returned eagerly, ‘ I can know no happiness without you.’ ‘ You are so unreasonable,’ she replied, with a smile of inimitable sweetness, ‘ I tell you I wish you happy, and you may be sure I wish myself so.’

Mrs. Saunders, who had been kept out of the room by her spouse, now entered, when the traces of joy visible on Trueman’s countenance, and the soft confusion on that of Miss Williams, too plainly spoke for her to doubt their being reconciled : She, therefore, with a look of friendship, congratulated them on the occasion. ‘ I knew, said she, if you once came together, I should lose my office of advocate with you young folks ; however, as I hate to be out of employment, your mamma must be troubled with my impertinence, except you, Miss Williams, have any objection to my pleading in favour of this young gentleman.’ Trueman bowed, and Miss Williams blushed her thanks. ‘ I’ll leave you for a few minutes,’ continued Mrs. Saunders ; ‘ but when I return, you must put an end to all your high-flown raptures, and converse like people of this world, since I shall bring half a score people with me.’

She left them ; but Trueman had hardly time to return his dear Peggy thanks for her generous condescension, before they were again interrupted by the appearance of all the company that had attended Miss Williams from the seat of Sir Jacob Gyles. Lady Gyles heightened Miss Williams’s colour, by taking notice of her blushes, while her spouse very sagaciously attributed the mending of her complexion to the country air.

C H A P. XI.

A scene of great confusion.

AS miss Peggy seemed uneasy at being thus the mark of observation, her friend Mrs. Saunders, in order to divert their attention, proposed walking in the garden: the ladies went; but Sir Jacob Gyles, and his son-in-law, accompanied Mr. Saunders to take a view of some new improvements that were making at a little distance from his house. Trueman, after having told his Peggy that he would wait on her in a few minutes, retired to write to London, as his happier prospect made him now in no haste to go thither; and lord Northly was the only gentleman who went with the ladies. They had not been long in the garden before they heard the sound of mens voices, as if at high words with each other: They ascended a mount, which enabled them to overlook the wall, which was at some distance, when they beheld a person who had the appearance of a gentleman, defending himself against the united force of two men. He called out for help, and seemed almost overcome by the wretches who were contending with him, who threatened, with many oaths, to put an end to his life. Lord Northly, without saying any thing to the ladies, hastened to the back-door of the garden, to assist the gentleman; but the moment the gate was opened, the very man who the instant before seemed in such danger, rushed in, followed by his two companions, while two others seized his lordship, and held him. The three villains went directly to the ladies, who looking on them as robbers, were extremely frightened; but as soon as Miss Williams beheld the face of him who seemed to be the master of the rest, she gave a violent cry, and said she was betrayed. The villain, with the utmost calmness, begged the other ladies not to be surprized, for he did not design to do them the least injury, his business being only with her he had got; he then twined his arms round Miss Williams's waist, and by the

the assistance of his accomplices, forced her, in spite of her cries, and all the opposition she could make, out at the back-door. She was followed by Mrs. Saunders, whose friendship was stronger than her fears; and that lady had the mortification to see the men force her friend into a coach, without being able to give her any succour. Lord Northly was still held by the two men without the garden-door; but as soon as the coach began to move, they let him go to provide for their own escape. Trueman, and several servants, alarmed by the cries of the ladies, were by this time come from the house. Mrs. Saunders, through weakness and terror, had fallen to the ground, and lord Northly was raising her, when Trueman, with a countenance, on which was painted all the horrors of despair, asked for his Peggy. 'Ask no questions,' replied his lordship, 'but give immediate orders for the servants to ride to the several turnpikes near us, that a coach in which are three men and a lady may be stopped, and I make no doubt but your Peggy will be found.' He ran, he flew back to the house to give these orders, which were punctually obeyed, without the least effect; nor could all their diligence enable them to discover the road they had taken. On this a messenger was dispatched to inform Mrs. Williams, the young lady's mother, of this disaster, tho' with the utmost precaution, as Mrs. Saunders believed her to be ill. Before his return they had some faint hopes of finding her, as lord Northly's servant saw a fellow enquiring for a post-chaise, whom he remembered to have seen in the morning speaking to the gardener, and on being seen, lurked very suspiciously out of sight.

This man the servant watched very narrowly, and after several hours following him at a distance, and sometimes being ready to give over the design, he beheld him enter an old house, or rather the ruins of one. This building was at a small distance from the grove, being separated from it only by a large orchard, the wall of which faced the back part of Mr. Saunders's garden. This, indeed, the man did not then

know; but a cry he heard from within made him imagine there was some one in distress confined there, if it was not the lady he was looking for: He knocked several times; at last the door was opened, and a very handsome woman in mourning, asked him his business; he told her very resolutely, he wanted to be informed of the meaning of the cry he had just heard; when she answered, without the least hesitation, that she had several people in her house who were out of their senses, and possibly it might be one of them. On this he went out of the house, in appearance satisfied, but still loitered about the place, resolving to watch who went in or out. The first person he saw passing by, whose appearance promised that he might be trusted, he sent to his master, with an account where he was, and what he had seen and heard, humbly desiring that not above one or two persons might be sent to him. Trueman and lord Northly approved this hint; and the first, though contrary to the advice of his lordship, went with one of Mr. Saunders's servants to his assistance. James, lord Northly's man, told Mr. Trueman, that he feared he had given him trouble for nothing; for he had made enquiry of some people that passed, and found the house had been lately taken by a widow, who had given out, that she designed it for a private mad-house. Trueman, on this information, was going from the place in the utmost dejection of mind, as this last glimmering of hope had now forsaken him, when a dreadful shriek assailed his ear. He was not certain to the voice, but it had too much likeness to Miss Williams's for him to be sure it was not hers. The man who came with him was dispatched for more assistance; but as the cry continued, he had not patience to wait for his return; he knocked with great violence at the gate, but no one came to open it. The sound of distress from within tortured his soul, and he was ready to tear himself through despair and vexation, when the gate opened. The faithful James had with incredible difficulty climbed up a high wall, but they had still a strong door to force.

As

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At this instant a chariot and fix, drove at a furious rate by the house: Trueman ran towards it; and as there were several attendants with fire arms, begged for assistance. A lady in the chariot ordered it to stop, which Trueman knew to be the mother of his dear, his distressed Peggy. 'O madam! he cried, for heaven's sake go no further, I am almost sure the dear creature you are looking for is shut up here.' Another violent scream confirmed what he said, since neither doubted its being the voice of Miss Williams. What was now the situation of Trueman's mind? James, with great agility, sprung over some rails that divided the court-yard from the garden, and returned with a ladder. This the faithful fellow set against the house, and was going to mount it, when a woman half naked appeared at that very window, and burst her hand through the glass, but was instantly torn away by a man and woman. Trueman, in spite of all opposition, animated by love, rage, and jealousy, snatched a pistol from a servant, and was at the top of the ladder in an instant. The court-yard was by this time full of people; seven or eight men were come from Mr. Saunders's, with that gentleman himself, and Lord Northly at their head; but this was all unheeded by Trueman. A sight most tormentingly interesting, took up all his attention; he saw his Peggy hurried out of the room; he heard her cry out to heaven for protection; he even heard her pronounce his name, with all the appearance of the most unutterable anguish; he, without knowing he was followed, burst through the window, seized the wretch who had almost dragged Miss Williams to another room, while James did the same by the woman. The man let the lady go the moment he beheld Trueman's pistol, and drew one from his pocket, but was held by Lord Northly before he could discharge it.

As there was no appearance of their meeting with much opposition, now they had got entrance, Trueman left the man in the hands of Lord Northly and one of the servants belonging to Mrs. Williams, and ran to Miss Peggy. The poor young lady had been

too much frightened to recollect her dishabille, for she was without either gown or handkerchief, and her hair hung down about her ears; but the instant she beheld her lover, all her care for the decencies of her sex returned. 'O, Trueman,' she cried, as she saw him approach her, 'if you love me, spare me the confusion I must feel, if you come near me while I am in this shocking condition; my clothes are in the next room.' The respectful lover cast his eyes on the ground, threw his charmer a handkerchief, with which she covered her neck, while he himself ventured into the next apartment for her clothes.

When he returned, he found the woman whom James had seized, was no other than his uncle's daughter. This wicked wretch was under great apprehension of his resentment; she with many tears, implored his pardon, but Trueman was in too much terror for what his Peggy might have suffered, to be in a very forgiving disposition; however, he told her, vile as he knew her to be, his regard for the memory of her father made him loth to punish her as she deserved; but till he knew the extent of her guilt, he could not answer for himself. 'If this lady,' said he, taking Miss Williams's hand, 'has not been injured beyond forgiveness, you may hope for mercy; but if she has, no punishment can make you half so miserable as you have made me.' 'Let us leave this horrid house,' cried Miss Williams, 'I tremble at the danger I have escaped.' 'O Trueman, you was never more my deliverer than you have been this day.' Mrs. Williams's entrance put an end to her expressions of gratitude; she flew to her daughter, and with tears of joy embraced her, while the young lady returned her caresses with equal transport. 'Once more, madam, I am safe,' she cried, 'and I once more owe that safety to the arm of Mr. Trueman; he has again ventured his life against a desperate villain, in my defence. O madam! guess what my heart would say: Can my father; can you rejoice in my escape, yet hate my deliverer?' The emotion that appeared in her look, while she spoke, gave her a thousand charms in the

the eyes of Trueman: he eagerly gazed, but as soon her eyes met his, she was covered with blushes. The delight she felt at seeing her mother again, awakened all her gratitude for Trueman: she could not resist the strong impulse she felt to plead for him in this interesting moment; yet when she recollected that he was present, when she saw he enjoyed her emotion, confusion and soft timidity stopped her voice. ‘I never hated Mr. Trueman,’ returned the lady. ‘I wish not, my dear, to suppress your gratitude for this last obligation; it would of itself have been sufficient to have made me his friend.’ Dear madam,’ said Trueman, ‘it is from your friendship that I hope for happiness; your lovely daughter has forgiven all my follies; let me intreat you not to force her to render me wretched, by recalling that forgiveness: a mutual consent of hearts, a sympathy of soul, must make us happy; let my Peggy keep her fortune; I neither wish for, or need it; the character I have been told you have heard of me will justify this precaution.’ ‘This is no place to talk of such a subject,’ replied Mrs. Williams. ‘Only tell me that I may hope for your consent,’ returned Trueman eagerly, ‘that the lovely Peggy may be mine, and not she herself shall pay you more submission and duty.’ ‘What answer, my dear shall I give this importunate man?’ said the lady to her daughter, with a smile. ‘Your friend, Mrs. Saunders will never forgive me, if, after this last obligation, I deny him my interest: if Peggy, sir, can forgive you,’ continued she, speaking to Trueman; ‘if she thinks your tenderness and merit deserve all her returns of affection; which, if her looks are the index of her heart, I am sure she does, take her, and with her all a fond mother’s wishes for a large portion of blessings on you both.’ Mrs. Williams waited not for his thanks, but instantly left the room. Trueman’s unworthy kinswoman again implored his pity, and earnestly begged she might not be made a public spectacle; she solicited Miss Williams to plead in her behalf, and as she made many promises.

promises of amendment, the tender-hearted young lady seemed inclined to shew her compassion.

Trueman stood a moment in a musing posture, and then said, that on one condition he would forgive not only her, but her accomplice; and then turning to Fitzsymonds, for he it was, said, 'Will you, sir, to escape the shame of being called to account for this vile contrivance, take this lady to wife, and quit England the first fair wind?' The haughty Irishman at first rejected this proposal, and bragged of his being a gentleman, and a man of honour; but when he heard Trueman give orders for his being carried before a magistrate, he desired a little time to consider of what he offered; this was granted, and he retired into the next room, under the guard of James and another servant, while Trueman waited his resolutions. Miss Williams told her lover, that she thought his tender mercies were cruelty; 'for, what punishment,' said she, 'can be equal to the misery of living in the nearest intimacy with those who know us to be wretches unworthy of the common blessings of life.' 'It is in their own power,' Trueman replied, 'to gain each other's esteem by a reformation; and I am so far from designing to make their being united a punishment, that if their future behaviour is such as I wish it, I will be more than in words their friend; and I will promote their happiness, if it is in the power of a moderate sum to do it.' A silent tear stole down the cheek of the woman, and her gratitude was just bursting into words, when Mr. Saunders came into the room, and loudly demanded to see the criminals, swearing, that society could not subsist, if such wretches escaped the hands of justice. Trueman's cousin, with a look in which was a mixture of indignation and terror, turned towards him, and replied, 'See, sir, see this injured face, and reflect who made me this detested wretch; you at least ought not to be my accuser.' Mr. Saunders instantly lost all the ferocity of his demeanor; he turned from her to hide his confusion, and said to Trueman: 'In how mean a light do I now appear! who can save me from my own
contempt?

‘contempt? I cannot, in the capacity of a magistrate, let this woman escape, and conscience, conscience will not let me condemn her.’ Trueman then told him on what terms he had promised to forgive both her and Fitzsymonds, who by this time had thought proper to accept of his proposals, as to marrying his kinswoman, though he told him he had no need of his assistance on any other account, as he was a gentleman.

C H A P. XII.

The conclusion.

THEY now went to the Grove, where Mrs. Saunders waited their coming with much impatience. Her spouse had been kind enough to ease her anxiety, by letting her know that her friend was safe the first moment it was in his power. She embraced Miss Williams with much affection, and said, ‘For heaven’s sake, my dear throw yourself into the protection of a worthy man that loves you, and be no more exposed to these terrors.’ ‘What, without my consent?’ answered Mrs. Williams, smiling, ‘will you teach Peggy a lesson of undutifulness? however, at once to prevent all solicitation, I tell you Mr. Trueman has not a friend in this company that wishes to give him joy more than I do. I will immediately write for her father’s approbation.’ In the midst of all this happiness, Trueman had the next morning one cause of discontent, for Lord Northly was gone without giving him the least intimation of his going; and from this abrupt departure, Trueman was not without some fears that his lordship still felt the force of Miss Williams’s perfections; but when he mentioned his fears to Mrs. Saunders, she made him easy, by assuring him, that he had promised to return, if possible, the following day.

In the evening some company came from London to Mrs. and Miss Williams, whom these ladies desired to receive without witnesses. This appearance of mystery did not a little alarm Trueman; however, when the

the young lady had been absent some time, a servant brought a message to him, that his company was desired in the little parlour; he there found his Peggy, her mother, and an elderly woman he did not know, with a child in her arms. Miss Williams took the child from her as soon as he came in, and the woman withdrew. I sent for you, Mr. Trueman,' said Mrs. Williams, very gravely, 'in compliance with the humour of this perverse girl; here is a little one that she thinks herself obliged to provide for, out of tenderness to its father, and has vowed never to marry till she can find a man that will call it his, and maintain it as such.' Who is its father?' asked Trueman, a good deal astonished; 'is he not able to provide for it himself?' 'As able as you are,' replied Miss Williams, 'but he can't own it without disgrace, and I love him too tenderly not to endeavour to alleviate every uneasiness that his folly has brought on him.' 'Love him too tenderly, madam! will you drive me to madness? whom do you love so tenderly?' 'The father of this infant,' replied Miss Williams, blushing. 'Has it no mother, madam, that you are thus tenderly concerned for its welfare?' returned Trueman. 'What I do for it, proceeds from my regard for its father,' answered the young lady; 'but if Mr. Trueman thinks it will be too great a burden to him, I can but continue single, and take care of it, as I have done already; but methinks you, of all people, might have been less scrupulous.' 'My dearest Peggy,' he cried, in the most beseeching accent, 'do not wound me with reproaches; is it possible to love as I do, and not feel exquisite anguish, when I hear you say you love another man; nay, that you love him tenderly? Recal that dreadful word, and I shall be easy and happy, though your charity excites you to maintain half a dozen infants.' 'I cannot, I will not recal what I have said,' answered Miss Williams; 'you must allow me to love him still; you know I have forgiven your weakness, and it might have had as bad a consequence as this of mine.' 'Yours, madam! yours! what weakness have you been

‘ been guilty of for me to pardon ? or, what has this child to do with it, if you had ? ’ ‘ I have told you, sir, I loved its father ; I should have thought I need not explain myself farther ; however, if Mr. Trueman will not yield to my acting the part of a mother by the little creature, when I am his wife, I will never become such ; for no consideration shall make me abandon it.’ ‘ A mother ! Miss Williams, a mother ! ’ he cried, staring wildly ; ‘ no, madam, no ; the whole world shall never make me believe it : but that she can take delight in giving me torture, my bursting heart feels. I hoped my Peggy had a mind too great to punish where she had promised to forgive.’ His look, his accent, every feature bespoke him extremely angry : He was going out of the room, when Miss Williams stepped up nimbly to him, caught his hand, and cried, ‘ Stay my Trueman, read this, and then condemn me.’

He took the paper, which was the unhappy Cleora’s letter. He ran it over eagerly as he stood, and when he had finished it, went up to Miss Williams, snatched her to his bosom in a rapture that her mother’s presence could not restrain. ‘ Hold, hold, sir,’ she cried, ‘ you’ll hurt my little girl, and I hope you will now permit me to love both it and its father.’ ‘ Charming woman ! ’ said he, ‘ could you forget all the resentments of your sex, and shew compassion to this innocent, because you believe it mine ? I will, my Peggy, if it is in the power of man to requite this goodness, make you happy, as exquisitely happy as you have this moment rendered me.’ ‘ I wish for no happiness on this side the grave,’ she replied, in an accent extremely tender, ‘ but what is in my Trueman’s power to give. Pardon me the pain I have given you ; I knew not how better to bespeak your care for this poor child.’ ‘ He shall pardon you but on one condition,’ said Mrs. Williams, ‘ by my consent ; and I suppose I have but small influence, for you seem both to have forgot that I am here.’ Miss Williams blushed extremely, and used all her efforts to disengage her hand from that of Trueman’s, while he
with

with a much better grace held it fast, intreating the good lady to name that condition. 'It is,' said she, 'to become Mrs. Trueman to-morrow morning.' 'Dear madam, what, without my father's knowledge!' 'Your father, my dear,' she returned, 'has given me the power of consenting, and as to the time 'tis a trifle; but if you think you shall love Mr. Trueman better a week, or a month hence, I am willing you should stay.'

At these words she left them to themselves. At first the young lady would very fain have deferred this important day; but the lover at length got the better of her scruples. Her little charge was in a sweet slumber, she uncovered its face, and shewed it to Trueman with a complacency that would have become a real mother; she asked him if he had any objection to her leaving it with the widow Hoskins; he consented: she then unasked, told him in what manner she was introduced to the unhappy Cleora. The child's waking interrupted the narration, the nurse was called, and with her came Mrs. Williams. 'Madam, I have prevailed,' cried Trueman, 'the dear creature consents.'... 'And we have agreed,' said Miss Williams, without letting him proceed, 'that the little Peggy shall be under the care of Mrs. Hoskins. If you, madam, will discharge this good woman, and reward her for her past diligence, Mr. Trueman will engage that its father shall reimburse your expence.' This Mrs. Williams did very generously, and the poor woman departed in much affliction for the loss of her little nursery. While Trueman was with his Peggy, Sir Jacob Gyles's son-in-law arrived at the Grove, to enquire after the health of Miss Williams, for he had before heard of her being safe: civility obliged her to see him, though at that time she wished for no company; she went with her mother to the great parlour; but was hardly seated before a servant told her, that a young woman desired earnestly to see her. The danger she had escaped made her extremely cautious and fearful; however, as the footman said the woman was in tears, and seemed in great distress, she desired she might be shewn

shown into the room she had just left, and went to her directly. The woman came forwards, at her entrance, and in a voice rendered almost inarticulate, with sobs intreated her not to tear from her her child ; ‘ Your ‘ bounty, madam,’ said the distressed Cleora, for she it was, ‘ has already saved my life, and providence, kind ‘ providence, threw my little girl into my arms. Do ‘ not, oh, do not part us now ! she is all my consolation, ‘ for my lost reputation and peace.’

The tears, the anxiety visible in this poor woman’s countenance, greatly influenced Miss Williams in her favour. ‘ Had I known,’ said this amiable ‘ young lady, that the poor child had had already a ‘ mother’s care, I should not have thought of removing ‘ her ; be easy, I will not take her from you ; but why ‘ did you conceal yourself ? I have had it in my power ‘ to do you service with your brother ; I long to hear ‘ your story.’ She then told her in what manner she found her child, and described the misery she felt when the nurse with whom she came from London, returned to the inn, where she waited for her without the infant, in very moving terms. Miss Williams rung for a servant, and ordered the little girl to be brought to her, Cleora ran to the maid, seized her child, and appeared almost beside herself with ecstasy. ‘ Stay here, madam,’ said Miss Williams, ‘ a few moments, and I ‘ may perhaps give you more cause for joy.’ She then went to the company she had left, but the young gentleman was taking his leave ; however he was, at Miss Williams’s intreaty, prevailed on to take a little turn with her in the flower-garden ; she began by telling him, the woman to whom she was sent for out, had begged her to ask him to grant her his pity ; ‘ and I have, she ‘ continued, so good an opinion of your benevolence, ‘ that I have ordered her to stay till I spoke to you.’ ‘ Dear madam,’ said he, ‘ I have very little money about me ; I’ll be accountable for what you please ; ‘ but, how came she to know me ?’ ‘ That’s a question ‘ she will best inform you ; let us go in and ask her,’ cried Miss Williams, opening a door into the room, where sat the unhappy Cleora suckling her child : she
arose

arose at the opening of the door ; but the moment she lifted up her eyes, sunk back in the chair, crying, ‘ Good God, my brother !’ The young gentleman was almost as much affected : She begged forgiveness and protection, which was very readily promised ; he even offered to take her home with him, but this was thought not convenient on account of her child ; however, he agreed to allow her a genteel sufficiency, to be paid her by Miss Williams ; and the repenting Cleora had once more a prospect of happiness, to which she had been long a stranger. The gentleman took his leave, and Cleora again expressed the high sense she had of Miss Williams’s goodness, in terms that spoke a grateful heart : she intreated that she might be suffered to go, without being seen, to some house in the neighbourhood ; this was granted, and a man was sent with her to the widow’s cottage, where Miss Williams promised to come. While Miss Williams was absent, her mamma had given Mrs. Saunders a brief account of what had passed between them and Trueman, and the way she had taken to punish her daughter for her so cruelly plaguing her poor lover. ‘ I am determined,’ said the good lady, ‘ to admit of no excuses. I hate the parade of a public wedding ; but methinks this designed bridegroom is run away from us.’ Just then entered Trueman ; ‘ I have been, madam,’ said he to Mrs. Williams, ‘ on the most delightful errand I ever went on in my life. Where is Miss Williams ?’ he was told in the little parlour ; thither he went, his Peggy met him at the door. ‘ I wanted to speak with you, sir, said she ; I have ventured to dispose of my little girl, contrary to your intention.’ ‘ Let the child alone for a moment,’ said the impatient Trueman, ‘ while I see how well I can guess at a lady’s finger.’ He then tried on a ring he had just bought. ‘ You are resolved to take my mamma at her word,’ said the young lady in some confusion ; ‘ I could wish for a little more time.’ ‘ Tell me truly, my dearest Peggy,’ said this most obliging lover, ‘ have you any reluctance that you will not have a day or two hence ? if not, can we be happy too soon.’ The coming

coming of the two ladies prevented an answer, but her looks bespoke a kind one. Miss Williams gave her mother an account of what had passed between Cleora, her brother, and herself, and described the maternal tenderness and apparent repentance of Cleora in such lively colours, that the good lady, in spite of her general propensity to be severe against the unchaste, seemed inclined to pity her, while Mrs. Saunders, who could better feel her distress, wept at the recital. Miss Williams then consulted with her mother, whether it would be proper to let Trueman know of Cleora's being so near him, and both the ladies advised her to an unreserved and open confidence.

He approved of every step his Peggy had taken, and was indulging the soft dictates of his heart, in giving her the praise her generosity deserved, when lord Northly arrived with a very splendid equipage: his first enquiry was after Trueman, and the young lady: when he was told they were together; he would not let them be apprised of his coming, but went himself into the room where they were: 'I suppose,' said he as he entered, 'you'll hardly forgive this interruption, my dear Trueman, I'll speak but three words and leave you; here's a paper that I want you to look over; I am told it will be of service to you; but I find you so happy, that I despair of making you more so.'

Trueman took the paper from his lordship, and said, 'Can you wonder, my lord, that I think myself almost beyond the reach of misfortune, when this lovely, this charming woman, has consented to be mine to-morrow morning.' 'Your presence, sir, will complement my happiness.' 'Compliment, compliment,' said his lordship, smiling, 'you would have been happy with such a bride, if I had been a thousand miles off; however,' he continued, with a free easy air, 'to let you see I can wear the willow with a good grace, I insist on being the lady's father. Here is in this casket, said he, pulling a small one from his pocket, 'a few baubles, which I injoin you Miss Williams, to accept as the first proof of your filial duty. A time may

“may come when you may see more reason for my acting thus than you do at present.” She took the casket; but his lordship stayed not for her acknowledgments. On her opening it, she found it contained a fine necklace, ear-rings, and a large pair of shoe-buckles; these, as the jewels were fine, was a very considerable present; but underneath was a paper of still greater value, in which were these words:

“**I** Promise to pay to Miss Peggy Williams, for her separate use, when she shall become the wife of my dear Trueman, five hundred pounds annually.

“NORTHLY.”

Trueman found in his papers, notes to the value of fifteen thousand pounds, all made payable to himself, without the least hint, that they had ever been his lordship's. This careless manner of conferring benefits enhanced the obligation. The grateful pair sought for his lordship, but he was retired to his chamber, as he was much fatigued. Mrs. Williams told Trueman, that her Peggy's fortune would at present hardly equal his, but her expectations from her uncle, as he had no child, were very considerable. ‘May he long live to enjoy what he possesses,’ cry'd Trueman; ‘I shall have all that can contribute to my happiness. When these dear lips shall pronounce, “I take thee for my wedded husband,” I shall think myself master of more wealth than is contained in both the Indies.’ It now grew late, and the morrow, the important morrow, needed some little preparation; they therefore separated for that night; Miss Williams went to her chamber with her mamma, who gave her some excellent instructions for the regulation of her future conduct, while she was employed in preparing her dress for the next day.

In the morning she came to breakfast in a rich white latten night-gown; the little flutterings of her heart added to, rather than diminished, the beauty of her complexion. Her lover and lord Northly met her at her entrance; she was going to speak, but appeared in some confusion; when the generous nobleman said, ‘Dear madam!

‘madam! you must remember nothing that passed last night, but my request of giving your hand. I promise you, I’ll never intrude again in the same manner.’ He led her to a seat, but, in spite of all her endeavours to the contrary, she was absent from every subject of conversation that was started; she dreaded, yet wished, the awful ceremony was over. Mrs. Saunders and her mother did all in their power to re-assure her, but in vain; her trembling hand could scarcely hold the tea-cup to her lips: even Trueman, who was all life at her first coming down, seemed to have caught the infection, and grew extremely grave and thoughtful; but by the time breakfast was finished, she grew more calm, and of consequence her lover more chearful. As soon as notice was given that the church was open, his lordship handed her into his chariot, and went in it himself; her lover, mother, Mr. and Mrs. Saunders followed in a coach. Miss Peggy went through the ceremony with a mind more collected than she or her friends feared; and when it was over the company returned to the Grove, as they went, only Trueman took the place of his lordship, and had the opportunity of entertaining his charming bride alone, for a few minutes. The day was spent with the most agreeable chearfulness; nothing was said, or any allusions made that might paint the cheeks of the bride, except once or twice from Mr. Saunders, who was not quite refined from the dregs of bad company. Him the lord Northly quickly silenced, as he was a compleat master of rapartee, and always used it as he ought, against whatever was offensive to decency and virtue. Mrs. Saunders, who enjoyed, in a peculiar manner, the delights of her friends, was remarkably chearful, and, indeed, every one of this happy company seemed to enjoy the collective pleasure of the whole. Soon after supper Mr. Trueman remarked to his bride, that he had heard her say she was fond of early hours; she blushed, but made no answer. Mrs. Saunders observed the whisper, and presently after left the room, and sent a maid-servant to Mrs. Williams to tell her she wanted to speak with her and the young lady in the nursery; they went, but no more returned
to

to the parlour. Trueman, under the pretence of seeing what was become of the ladies, left his lordship and Mr. Saunders, without bidding them good night. He was conducted to his lovely wife, who was just in bed. The next day was passed with the same good humour, and regard to decency as the former; and on the third, they set out for London.

Mr. Trueman purchased a handsome estate in Buckinghamshire, and was, a few years after his marriage, made sheriff of the county. Monf. le Brun and Mr. Williams died within the first year, as did Cleora and her infant of the small-pox, before the child was two years old; but Mr. and Mrs. Trueman were blest with the life of their mother, till their eldest daughter was almost marriageable. This happy couple yet live an advantage to society, and an honour to human nature.

F I N I S.

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